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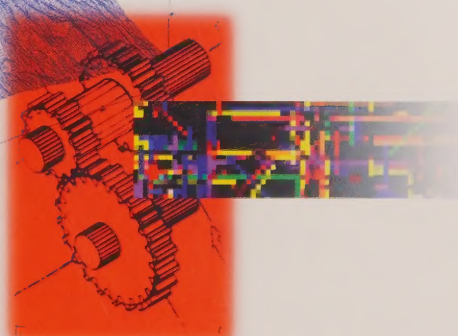
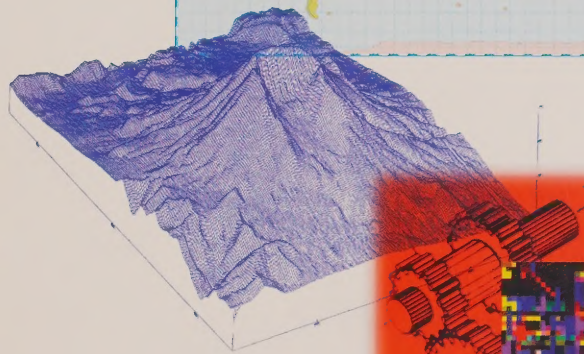
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94	94
54	54
90	90
9635	555
34	34
6593	6593
93	93
8540	8540
546	546
5832	5832
36	36
4337	537
378	63
543	566

For the Love of Learning

Report of the Royal Commission on Learning



Mandate, Context, Issues



Ontario

FOR THE LOVE OF LEARNING

For the Love of Learning

Report of the Royal Commission on Learning

Volume I **Mandate, Context, Issues**



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Commission royale sur
on Learning l'éducation

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Commissioners / Membres de la commission
Manisha Bharti - Avis E. Glaze - Dennis J. Murphy

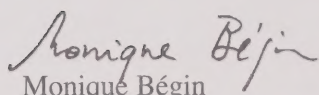
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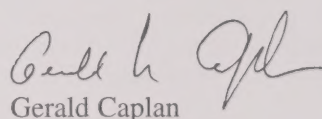
The Honourable Dave Cooke
Minister of Education and Training

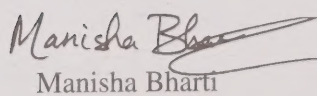
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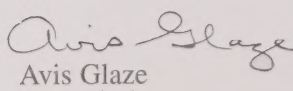
It is with a sense of great hope for the future of the young people of Ontario that we respectfully submit to you the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Learning.

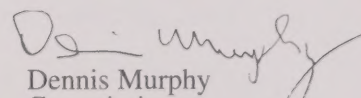
Very sincerely yours,

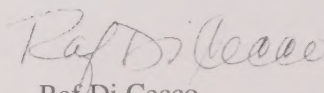

Monique Bégin
Co-chair


Gerald Caplan
Co-chair


Manisha Bharti
Commissioner


Avis Glaze
Commissioner


Dennis Murphy
Commissioner


Raf Di Cecco
Executive Director



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Ontario

Executive Council
Conseil des ministres

Order in Council Décret

On the recommendation of the undersigned, the Lieutenant Governor, by and with the advice and concurrence of the Executive Council, orders that:

Sur la recommandation du soussigné, le lieutenant-gouverneur, sur l'avis et avec le consentement du Conseil des ministres, décrète ce qui suit :

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario, in support of its commitment to economic renewal and social justice, has identified the need to set new directions in education to ensure that Ontario youth are well-prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, and

WHEREAS Ontario's public and separate school systems are under continuing pressure to respond to the impact of new technologies and a changing social and economic milieu, and

WHEREAS Ontario residents expect high standards in elementary and secondary education and deserve appropriate measures of accountability, relevant curriculum content to meet the needs of students and society, improved retention rates, effective links to work and higher education, an effective and efficient system of education and increased levels of public involvement in education, and

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario believes that it is in the public interest that ample opportunity be provided for full public participation in the consideration of matters related to the delivery of elementary and secondary education in Ontario, and

WHEREAS pursuant to section 2 of the Public Inquiries Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.41, whenever the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers it expedient to cause inquiry to be made concerning any matter that he declares to be a matter of public concern, and the inquiry is not regulated by any special law, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by commission, appoint one or more persons to conduct the inquiry, and

WHEREAS the Lieutenant Governor in Council deems it expedient to cause inquiry to be made into education concerns and has concluded that this can best be achieved by means of a public inquiry instituted pursuant to the provisions of the Public Inquiries Act;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the provisions of the Public

Inquiries Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.41, a commission be issued appointing Gerald Caplan, Monique Bégin, Msgr. Dennis Murphy, Avis Glaze and Manisha Bharti commissioners under the designation the Royal Commission on Learning ("Commission"), and appointing Gerald Caplan and Monique Bégin Co-chairs of the Commission, such Commission to present a vision and action plan to guide Ontario's reform of elementary and secondary education and for such purpose to study and report upon the matters set out as follows:

Shared Vision

What are the values and principles that should guide the education of Ontario's elementary and secondary school students?

What are the key goals of Ontario's elementary and secondary school system and who are its clients?

How are strong partnerships in education ensured?

Program

- What knowledge, skills and values do elementary and secondary students need to prepare them for the future?
- How, and by whom, should this body of skills, knowledge and values be developed to fulfill the specific mandate of all publicly funded school systems?
- How should the curriculum in elementary and secondary schools be organized and delivered?
- What is the best way to ensure that more students graduate from secondary school?
- What is the best way to help students make effective transitions into school and from school to work/community life, further education or training?
- How should teachers be prepared for and supported in their new roles and responsibilities to meet the needs of all students? Who should be responsible for teacher education, both before and throughout a teacher's career?
- What is the best way to ensure continuous quality improvement?

Accountability

- What standards should be set for all elementary and secondary students and how and by whom should they be set?
- How should students be evaluated?
- How should student progress be reported?
- How should schools and programs be evaluated?
- To whom should progress be reported and for what purpose?
- Who should be accountable for results achieved in education?

Education Governance (within the constitutional and Charter rights in education)

- What should be the respective roles and responsibilities of the partners in education, e.g., students, parents, teachers, school boards, the community, and the Ministry of Education and Training?
- What accountability mechanisms should exist to ensure that roles are respected and responsibilities met?
- What is the most effective, efficient organizational structure for elementary and secondary education in Ontario?
- What models exist for French language governance within such a structure?

AND FURTHER that the Commission is empowered to request oral submissions and written briefs from any person or organization in the conduct of its enquiries and to engage persons with special knowledge in the matters heretofore mentioned to cause research papers to be prepared in areas of research considered essential to the Commission to formulate its recommendations;

AND FURTHER that the Commission hold public hearings in locations to be determined by the Commission for the purpose of receiving public input into the matters under consideration;

AND FURTHER that all Government Ministries, Boards, Agencies and Commissions assist the Commission to the fullest extent in order that the Commission may carry out its duties and functions, and that the Commission shall have authority to engage such counsel, expert technical advisors, investigators and other staff as the Commission deems proper, at rates of remuneration to be approved by Management Board of Cabinet, in order that a complete and comprehensive report may be prepared and submitted to the

Minister of Education and Training;

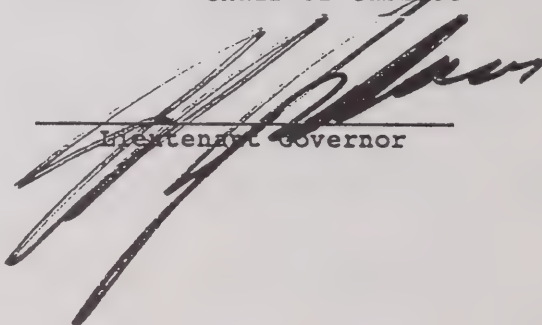
AND FURTHER that the Commission make interim reports to the Minister of Education and Training at times agreed to by the Commission and the Minister;

AND FURTHER that the Commission make its final report to the Minister of Education and Training; as soon as practicable but not later than the 31st day of December 1994 recommending such changes in the laws, policies, and procedures as in the opinion of the Commission are necessary and desirable to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and accountability of education in Ontario.

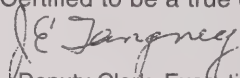
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Chair of Cabinet

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Lieutenant Governor

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It is still dark most mornings

at 7:15 as Nelson climbs aboard the big yellow bus. His destination is a Grade 7 classroom at King George school in Northwestern Ontario.

His parents have already left for work, his father to the papermill, his mother to her job as a teller in a local bank. Nelson's breakfast has been prepared by his widowed grandmother, who lives across

Their way into

Our schools will never be perfect. Yet our striving as Ontarians requires that they be better than they have been. Like no other social institution, our schools hold the promise of a way into the future for us all.

the street. This morning, as is often the case, he has been deeply impressed by the wisdom of this serene, and to him, wonderful woman. She has such an easy certainty about life. But as Nelson and his friends travel along a northern road made bumpy with frost boils, their chatter betrays little of this same confidence and certainty.

Nelson has heard his parents discuss the possible closing of the mill and what this will do to their financial future. Today he and a few of his native classmates will be presenting a project on their culture, religion, and the history of Native peoples before the arrival of the Europeans. The reception they can expect from the rest of the class remains a question.

Already some of Nelson's classmates are skipping a lot of school. And, although he is a good student, he is beginning to wonder what the future holds for him. Like many Grade 7 students he finds the curriculum to be somewhat repetitious and of little relevance to the rest of his life. Nelson has obvious athletic talents and is the star of his hockey team. Sports and fitness magazines are his favourite reading. Recently this has led him to become interested in all of the forces and mechanics involved in body movements – what the scientists call kinesiology.

At school, however, he receives scant encouragement for these interests and little in the line of reward for the effort he puts forth. He is increasingly bored by it all. As far as he can see, high school doesn't hold out much hope for anything better, although there is a hockey team there that he would like to play for.

As Nelson begins his daily

journey to school, Sally kisses her mother good-bye in Toronto, where it is 8:15. She will catch the bus and subway to the spanking new Arts Academy that she has chosen. There she specializes in drama. One of the things Sally notices is that her teachers, who have also chosen this high school, are as excited as she is about their school and their forthcoming production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

As Sally heads out the door, her mother is less excited. She and her husband miss the support of the community that was so much part of their life in Saskatchewan. Their high-rise seems to breed anonymity, and even the people in their local church seem

the future...

cold and distant. Despite two incomes – her secretarial wages and her husband's salary with a security firm – she wonders whether they can meet even the minimal needs of Sally and her two younger brothers. She worries about Sally's casual attitude towards sex, the number of her daughter's friends who have become pregnant, the ever-present threat of AIDS, and the constant news reports about the level of drug use and violence in the teenage world.

But as Sally climbs onto the bus that will take her on the first stage of her daily trip to school, she feels that she is already launched upon a career in the world of entertainment. Not only the English and drama courses, but even the courses she takes in history and social science seem related to her ambitions.

Annette has but a 15-minute

walk each morning to École Notre-Dame, an elementary school in Eastern Ontario. Her backpack carries both her school books and her lunch – no-one will be home until after 5:30 in the afternoon. She meets Chantal, an immigrant from Senegal, and Jean-Paul on her way, and despite the admonitions of her parents and teachers, they discuss in English the previous night's episode of *Star Trek*.

Annette's parents have moved to this part of the province so that she can be immersed in a culture, language, and a religious faith on which they place great value. In the evening, however, they feel too tired after work to follow Annette's school career with her. From Annette's report card, they suspect that their daughter isn't reading as well as her Grade 4 classmates. The teacher seems reassuring, but recent newspaper articles have spoken of how reading deficits often go unremedied in the schools. Perhaps they will have to see the teacher, maybe next week ... They wonder sometimes if the financial and material good of the family has come to overshadow all their other family values. As Annette continues on to school, she has little sense that the shape of her future has been touched already by some ambiguity.

Their way into the future...

For the last two months Patrick

has been proudly heading out to school in Windsor at the wheel of his recently purchased '69 Mustang. Twenty hours of work a week at a local fast-food outlet provided the down payment and continues to assure enough money for insurance, gas, and repairs. Most of the repairs he has managed himself. His friends recognize that he is a whiz at anything mechanical. Although an "A" student in his earlier years at school, Patrick doesn't do well at school now. He is often too tired to concentrate after a night's work.

He is fascinated by the technology that is used to diagnose motors and other car components, and he spends hours at auto shows. The school guidance counsellor doesn't seem much interested in Patrick's enthusiasms, nor is she able to find a workplace spot where he could follow up his interests more closely. Most of her interest seems to be in those students who are planning to go to university – and, at least at first blush, Patrick doesn't seem to fit that mold. He has been in high school for three and a half years, and he remains uncertain about his future plans.

There is little uncertainty in Maggie's

mind as she heads out to cross the city to the alternative school where she began four months ago. At 27, she finds herself excited for the first time about going to school. As a single parent with a three-year-old daughter, she was devastated when she lost her factory job a year ago. Now, as an adult student, she is taking upgrading courses that are preparing her for the field of medical technology, which has always been her dream.

A program tailored to her specific family and academic needs has been worked out. The school provides on-site daycare for her daughter, and she has surprised herself and her teachers by quickly finishing the first requisite math and chemistry courses in her program.

As we turn the corner to the twenty-first century, Nelson, Sally, Annette, Patrick, and Maggie set out each morning for school in the space age, and in an age of increasingly fragile families. They go into a world of high tech and desperate economic times, as members of a generation that witnesses medical miracles and the ravages of AIDS. Essential to their way into the future is the way in which they will be educated in Ontario's schools. Their journey is the journey of us all – of all citizens of Ontario. Their future is our future, and it depends in no small part on how we educate them.



Preface

Talk about your lifelong learning. For two people whose obsessions, over the many decades, have included a mastery of new areas of public policy, the past 20 months have been the equivalent of winning a lottery. We have had the privilege of being able to immerse ourselves in an issue in which neither of us pretended any great recent expertise, about which party politics did not impose particular ideological constraints, and around which there swirls great public controversy. What a treat! We are grateful to whoever decided to choose us for this singular opportunity.

In an eventful year and two-thirds, two aspects of our experiences are perhaps most notable. First is the unexpected lack of consensus that we found to exist in Ontario on just about every aspect of the education system. As we moved around Ontario, we discovered passion, concern, knowledge, myths, commitment, grandstanding – indeed, just about everything but agreement. Ontarians disagreed about what the major problems were and they disagreed about what the solutions were.

Which brings us to our second main observation. To be perfectly honest, when we finished our public hearings we could not conceive how we could find common ground. There was no reason to believe that the five members of the Commission, who were virtual strangers to each other the day we first came together, would not reflect the lack of consensus that existed in the public at large. Yet we ended with a unanimous report. If the argument of our study – that we have the capacity to forge an excellent education system – provides grounds for optimism, as we believe it does, then the fact of our unanimity should offer hope that Ontarians might, just might, be able to reach agreement on what its education system should be as we leap across the threshold towards the mystique of the 21st century.

But it was not easy for us and it will not be easy for Ontarians. We were five tough-minded individuals, each with certain concerns that mattered to her or him far more than to the others. Sometimes we persuaded our colleagues of the indispensability of the word or phrase or recommendation we could simply not live without; at other times, each of us somehow learned to live without. Each of us gave up

something, a price we consciously chose to pay to achieve the greater goal of a report that was realistic, balanced, and eminently implementable.

If we can do it, why can't Ontario? In the end, we believe our real achievement was being able to tap into the common hopes and desires that ran deep beneath the surface of so many apparently conflicting positions. Obviously we could not adopt every suggestion of every submission. No-one can. It cannot be done. But as two long-time political veterans who have no illusions about how the game is played, we think we honoured – and were able to reconcile – the best ideas of just about every player in the system without ignoring the interests of any of them. If each is prepared to see it this way, to see their glass as half-full rather than half-empty, to show the same flexibility as the Commission itself, we'll be well on the road to building our better education system.

As people with some familiarity with such matters, it seems to us that we were also notable in the history of commissions in Canada and the provinces for another reason: with a relatively modest research staff and secretariat, we were truly creatures of our time in learning how to work smarter with small resources. And we are on time!

Our fellow Commissioners threw themselves into their work with gusto and dedication, and to say we five functioned as complete equals through every long, arduous step of the way would not exaggerate the process one whit.

As for our staff, their commitment and devotion could hardly have been greater. They worked impossible hours, were prodigiously productive and superhumanly efficient, and it is literally unimaginable what would have happened to us without them. They own this report as much as the five whose names appear as commissioners, and our gratitude to them is boundless.

It is normally invidious to single out individuals for special mention in these prefaces. But the two of us have broken customs before, and this is surely an appropriate place to do so again. We're certain neither Dennis Murphy nor Avis Glaze – to whom we owe a huge debt of thanks for their significant contribution – will feel neglected if we make special mention here of our colleague, Manisha Bharti. During the course of

our work, friends invariably asked whether Manisha was as good as her reputation suggested. Our answer, invariably, was “Better”. We witnessed her steady growth from 17 to 19. We would like to think she learned something from us; certainly we learned enormously from her. It should be sufficient to say that, on top of her other contributions, the title of this report is due entirely to her.

Finally, not to record here our specific debt to Raffaella Di Cecco, our executive director, would simply be a rank injustice. It is entirely possible that this report could have

been concluded without either of us; it could not have been done without Raf, whose talents, sensibilities and insights seemed unlimited. Thank you, Raf; when Manisha becomes Prime Minister, one of us will recommend you as Chief of Staff (if only we knew the party affiliation of either of you), or Clerk of the Privy Council (depending on which of us, if either, have the remotest influence at that time).

Monique Bégin

Gerald Caplan

Acknowledgments

Members and staff of the Royal Commission on Learning gratefully acknowledge the help of the thousands of people – parents, students, educators, representatives of groups across Ontario – who shared their views, who offered advice, and whose experiences helped clarify the issues before us. By participating in the crucial debate on education, they contributed to the life of the province, now and in the future.

We extend personal thanks to the schools: the principals, teachers, support staff and the many students who assisted us

during the hearings. Their hospitality and enthusiasm made our job easier and more pleasurable.

We wish to extend our special thanks to the wonderful youth volunteers who enabled us to hear from and spend time with many students and young people who normally are never seen by those studying education.

We are indebted to Dr. Roberta Bondar for her assistance as the Commission’s special advisor in science.

Volume I
Mandate, Context, Issues

Letter of Transmittal v
Order in Council vii
Staff List xi
Their way into the future xii
Preface xvi
Acknowledgments xvii

Introduction to the Report 1

A climate of uncertainty 1
**Some recent history of educational
change and reform** 2
Improving Ontario's schools 3
News, both good and bad 4
Our way into the future 5
 Early childhood education 6
 Teacher development 6
 Information technology 6
 Community education 7
The curriculum 7
Making change happen 8

Chapter 1:
**The Royal Commission
on Learning** 10

Public consultation 11
 Talking to people 11
 Media coverage 11
 Outreach 12
Experts and research 13
Commissioners' meetings 13

Chapter 2:

Education and Society 14

Education in Ontario: A brief history 15

Curriculum and teaching methods 17
Education rights of the French-language
minority 17
Questions of purpose 18

More recent educational history 18

Elementary schools 19
Secondary schools 20
Declining enrolments 21
Major legislation in the 1980s 21
Financing education 23
Legislative reports 23
Premier's council 23
Public funding to private schools 24
Anti-racism and ethno-cultural
equity initiatives 24
The significance of recent policy changes 24

Reflecting on change 24

Ontario: Picture of the province 25

Ontario's changing economy 25

Unemployment 25
Poverty 26
Are education and economic
prosperity connected? 26

Demographic factors 27

The family 27
Emotional well-being 28
Fertility rates 28
Immigration 28
Native peoples 28
Visible minorities 28
Roman Catholic and francophone families 29

Values and knowledge 29

Educational statistics for Ontario 30

Some indicators of how we are doing 32

Costs of education 34

Education expenditures 35
Cost comparisons 35

For the Love of Learning

Report of the Royal Commission on Learning

Salaries 36

Pupil-educator ratio 36

Language programs 36

A national and international context for educational reform 36

Chapter 3:

People's Voices 44

**The purposes of education and
curriculum issues 45**

Teaching and teacher education 47

Assessment and accountability 47

**Organization of education
(governance) 49**

**Public concerns and the
Commission's mandate 49**

Chapter 4:

Purposes of Education 52

The issues 53

Sharpening the focus:

A set of purposes 54

Schools in the broader community:

A framework 55

Primary and shared responsibilities 56

Linking purposes with responsibilities 57

The hidden curriculum 58

Values 60

Conclusion 62

Chapter 5:

What Is Learning? 64

**What do we know about how
learning happens? 65**

Learning occurs from cradle to grave 65

Learning occurs with and without
direct instruction 66

Learning depends on practice 66

Learning is a social process 67

Learning occurs most readily when
learners want to learn 67

Learners have to know how to go
on learning 68

Learning is different for different learners 68

There are barriers to learning 69

Learning for life: The importance of early learning 70

**Informal to formal learning: The
transition from home to school 71**

Active teaching and learning 72

Exploiting the diversity of the group 72

Extending the boundaries of the
learning environment 72

Creating a learning community that works 73

Chapter 6:

What Is Teaching? 76

Characteristics of good teaching 77

Teachers care about and are committed
to students and their learning 78

Teachers know the subjects they teach
and how to teach the material to students:
In other words, they know how to make
knowledge accessible to students 79

Guided by clear goals, teachers organize
and monitor student learning 80

Teachers do not always work in isolation; they
learn from and collaborate with others,
including students, colleagues, parents,
and the community 81

Teachers critically examine their own practice,
and continue to learn throughout their
careers 81

Good teachers in their schools 82

Conclusion 82

Volume II
**Learning: Our Vision
for Schools**

Introduction to Volume II 1

Key issues 2

- Curriculum quality 3
- Curriculum focus 3
- Fairness and openness 4
- Efficiency 5

Strategies for improvement: A learning system that focuses on the learner and on literacies 7

- The system 7
- The learner 8
- A curriculum for literacies 8
- The literacies across the curriculum 10

Chapter 7:

**The Learner from Birth to Age 6:
The Transition from Home
to School 12**

The learner from birth to age 3:

- The literacies curriculum of home and care 13**

The learner from age 3 to 6: The literacy curriculum in a school setting 15

Chapter 8:

**The Learner from Age 6 to 15:
Our Common Curriculum 24**

The transition to compulsory schooling 25

The foundation: The essential elements of the elementary curriculum 26

- Literacy/communications skills 27
- Numeracy/problem-solving 31
- Group learning and interpersonal skills and values 32
- Scientific literacy 36
- Computer literacy 37

Core subjects 39

- The arts: Dance, drama, music, visual arts 40
- Career education 41

- History 43
- Official languages and international languages 43
- Physical and health education 46
- Technology (broad-based) 47

Continuity in curriculum and learning, Grades 1–6 48

The transition to adolescence: Special consideration of the needs of learners from age 12 to 15 49

- Relational needs 49
- Planning needs 51
- The need for choice, decision-making, and control 52

The curriculum as the basis of a learning system through Grade 9 54

- The inclusion of Grade 9 55
- The focus on learner outcomes 55
- Curriculum integration 60
- Inclusiveness of *The Common Curriculum* 61

Chapter 9:

**The Learner from Age 15 to 18:
Further Education and
Specialization Years 66**

The current context of secondary education in Ontario 68

Suggestions for reorganizing the secondary school 74

- The duration 74
- Curriculum organization 76
- Flexibility 85
- Curriculum content 87
- The transition to work from school (and back again) 93
- Summary 94
- Adult education 96

For the Love of Learning

Report of the Royal Commission on Learning

Volume III The Educators

Chapter 10:

Supports for Learning: Special Needs and Special Opportunities 100

Supports for some students 101

- Support for students with different language backgrounds and different learning needs based on language 101
- Support for students with disabilities, and for slow and fast learners 108

Supports for learning for all students 119

- Career education 120
- Social and personal guidance teaching and counselling 123

Chapter 11:

Evaluating Achievement 130

Student assessment: What people told us 132

The recent history of student assessment in Ontario 133

Assessing individual students 136

- Assessing for individual improvement:
 - The most important reason 137
- Accounting for student assessment:
 - Reporting what is learned 140
- The uses of information technology in improving student assessment 143
- Avoiding bias in assessment: Respecting differences, recognizing diversity 145

Large-scale assessment of student achievement and the effectiveness of school programs 148

- Large-scale assessment of student achievement 148
- The effectiveness of school programs:
 - Program and examination review 151
- Reporting the results of large-scale assessments 154

Conclusion 156

- Conclusion: What We Have Said about the Learning System 16

Volume II Recommendations 168

Chapter 12:

The Educators 1

Section A: Professional issues 1

- A statistical snapshot 1
- Why they become, and stay, teachers 2
- The culture of teaching 2
- The teacher and time 4
- Reaching into the community 5
- School-based professional development 6
- Concerns of teacher federations 7
- Supportive technology 7
- Teaching: The vision and the reality 7
- Teacher organizations and professionalism 7
- Collective bargaining rights 8
- A college of teachers 9

Section B: Teacher education 11

- What did we hear? 12
- Historical context 12
- Current context for reforming teacher education 13
- Pre-service teacher preparation in Ontario today 14
- Teacher education for the future 17
- Professional development and lifelong learning 29
- Teacher education: Summary 36

Section C: Evaluating performance 36

- What are the issues? 36
- Purposes of performance appraisal 38

Section D: Leadership 40

- Principals 40
- Department heads 46
- Supervisory officers (SOs) 47

Conclusion 53

Volume III: Recommendations 60

Volume IV
Making it Happen

Introduction to Volume IV 1

Chapter 13:

**Learning, Teaching, and
Information Technology 4**

A new environment 6

Possibilities and concerns 10

**Information technology's
contribution to learning 12**

Making it happen 15

Teacher education 15

Hardware 17

On-line: Learning it on the grapevine 20

Other instructional technologies 21

Realizing the potential 23

TVOntario/La Chaîne 27

Conclusion 27

Chapter 14:

**Community Education:
Alliances for Learning 33**

**The problem: Expansion of the role
of schools 33**

**Our response: Creating communities
of concern 35**

**A local focus for community
education 37**

**Supporting and sustaining a diversity
of models 37**

**Barriers to community education:
Recognizing them and removing
them 39**

Community education:

Making it happen 42

... in schools 42

... with families 43

... and the new school-community councils 44

... with school boards 45

... with the provincial government:

Adopting an agenda for redesigning
systems to support community
education 47

Setting a timeline for action 48

Conclusion 49

Chapter 15:

Constitutional Issues 52

**The Roman Catholic education
system 53**

A brief history of Roman Catholic schools 54

Issues and recommendations 56

**Learning in French: Rights, needs,
and barriers 60**

A glimpse of history 61

Who are the Franco-Ontarians? 62

Their constitutional rights 65

The recognition of constitutional rights 66

The future of a community 70

Aboriginal peoples 73

Who are the aboriginal peoples
of Ontario? 73

History of Native education 73

What we heard 76

Issues and recommendations 78

Conclusion 83

Chapter 16:

Equity Considerations 86

Religious minorities 88

**Language, ethno-cultural, and
racial minorities 90**

Conclusion 96

Chapter 17:

**Organizing Education: Power and
Decision-Making 100**

Stakeholders and power 101

The players 101

**Allocating and exercising
decision-making powers 102**

Schools 103

School boards 109

The Ministry of Education and Training 117

The provincial government 122

Conclusion 123

For the Love of Learning

Report of the Royal Commission on Learning

Chapter 18:

Funding 126

Historical context 127

Education funding in Ontario 128

Current concerns 128

Equity 128

Adequacy 132

Conclusion 133

Chapter 19:

The Accountability of the System 136

Accountability in education:

What does it involve? 137

Who is accountable? 138

Indicators of quality 139

Assessment agency 140

Accountability and consistency 141

Reporting 142

Conclusion 144

Chapter 20:

Implementing the Reforms 146

Previous reports 148

The change process: How educational change happens 148

What about the Commission? What do we hope our work will achieve? 149

Engines or levers for change 150

Early childhood education 151

Community-education alliances 151

Teacher development and professionalization 152

Information technology 152

What actions are needed? 153

An implementation commission 154

Other support for implementation 154

Provincial actions 155

Suggested short-term actions for the provincial government and for the Ministry: 1995–96 156

The framework for reform 156

Curriculum 156

Assessment and accountability 156

Power, influence, and equity 156

Early childhood education 157

Teacher professionalization and development 157

Information technology 157

Community-education alliances 157

Actions by other stakeholders 157

Cost issues 158

A call to action 159

Inertia 159

Power issues 159

Collective bargaining issues 160

Overload 160

Lack of resources 160

Implementation responsibilities 161

Appendix 1: Action Plan for

Government 163

Appendix 2: Action Plan for

Education Stakeholders 164

For the Love of Learning

Recommendations 166

Appendices 182

A: Submitters 184

B: Youth Outreach 217

C: Consultation with Groups and Individuals 220

D: Public Hearings – Dates and Sites 222

E: Schools Visited 224

F: Background Papers – Author and Title 225

G: Commissioners' Biographies 226

Monique Bégin

Gerald Caplan

Manisha Bharti

Avis E. Glaze

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Introduction to the Report

The first task of any body brought together to study a matter of intense public interest and controversy is to recognize the climate in which it will operate, the history and dimensions of the issues it will have to define and address, and the concerns and needs of the people it has been created to serve.

This is particularly true when the subject is education. It is education, after all, that touches each of us at one time or another in our lives, and that, more than most things, can intimately and directly limit, or help create, our future. Few public institutions matter more to the destiny of the ten million people of this province. Therefore, we set about our work determined to explore, to the greatest degree possible, the way the education system operates, and to find out how it could operate better.

A climate of uncertainty

Like all organizations, our Commission operated within a particular time, and our deliberations were inevitably influenced by the context of unsettling truths around us.

- Our society is characterized by turbulence, creating widespread uncertainty and anxiety. Canadians fear a future of diminished opportunity, and expect public institutions to deal with this acute concern.
- Our economic system is changing, while technology is advancing at a geometrically accelerating pace.
- The fallout from those related phenomena includes the prospect of a large core of permanently unemployed and underemployed men and women, of younger people in particular, and of considerable confusion about the future of work.
- In the current political climate, and for the foreseeable future, projects requiring vast new public funding will be seen as impractical. The operative cliché is that it is possible to work smarter, doing even more with even less.
- The composition of Canada's population is changing dramatically, not least in Ontario and, above all, in southern

Ontario. Each year, we become an increasingly diverse nation, but our institutions often fail to reflect that diversity.

- There is a sense that traditional social institutions have been breaking down, and that the family, as well as community and religious organizations, are no longer able to instil personal and ethical values in successive generations of Canadians.
- Despite uncertainty about common values, large segments of the population are not content to live in a society that has no identifiable values.
- At the same time, and for a variety of reasons, Canadians have been losing faith in their public institutions. As a result, they have been demanding that these operate more openly, involve more citizen participation, and become more explicitly accountable to the public at large.

Schools necessarily reflect – at least to some extent – the societies in which they operate. Therefore, it is not surprising that today's education system feels shaky, unsure, lacking in self-confidence, and struggling with a mandate that is increasingly uncertain and whose purposes are no longer self-evident. Not only is that the background against which the Commission operated, it was the reason the Commission was established.

Like so many other institutions, schools are finding it enormously difficult to cope with the never-ending change that swirls around and through them. Small wonder that educators are anxious – and sometimes discouraged – by responsibilities heaped on an already overburdened system that has neither the resources nor the capacity to cope. Small wonder that the public is dissatisfied with an education system it keeps turning to as society's best, last hope in

While we believe that we have come remarkably close to a new vision of an educational system that meets many of the central hopes and desires of most of Ontario's citizens, we have no illusions that we will satisfy everyone.

meeting the challenges that lie ahead – whatever those challenges may be. It is inevitable that schools are then criticized for not being up to the task of rescuing a floundering society. As, indeed, they are not. As, indeed, they cannot be.

Members of the Commission became increasingly aware that it would be no easy task to meet the expectations of the many people who insisted that our job was to articulate a consensus on the purposes and practices of education in Ontario. As will repeatedly be made clear in the pages of this report, ours is an educational system of endless diversity: in the nature of the student body; in the prescriptions for remedying its various inadequacies; in the large numbers of troubled young men and women it must serve; in the formidable responsibilities it carries; as well as in people's lofty expectations of it.

Without doubt, the system exists in an era of extreme anxiety about what the future holds for Ontario's children, as well as of stress related to our apparent need to be "competitive" in a ruthless globalized economy. It must meet often-unacknowledged limitations that constrain the possibilities of real change – all this in the face of an extraordinary level of disagreement, even among the learned, about how either good teaching or good learning actually happens.

It would be flattering, to the Commission and to the entire province, if we had been able to devise a formula for a school system that would meet everyone's approval and banish all problems, actual and perceived. While we believe that we have come remarkably close to a new vision of an educational system that meets many of the central hopes and desires of most of Ontario's citizens, we have no illusions that we will satisfy everyone.

Some recent history of educational change and reform

For decades, substantial numbers of Ontarians, along with people in much of the rest of the world, have complained that their schools are failing to produce properly educated young people. Our esteemed predecessors of the past half-century – the much-neglected Hope Commission of 1950 and the much-distorted Hall-Dennis committee of 1968 – were eloquent in reporting the disenchantment of so many people.

It is useful to recall that the Hope commission did its work during an era when Ontario had standardized departmental exams for Grades 11, 12, and 13, as well as a carefully prescribed Grade 13 curriculum, used uniformly across the province. It is also worth remembering that those "good old days" were a time when, of all students beginning school life, only two-thirds would enter high school and, of those, only 13 percent would graduate; of that meagre number, only four in a hundred would enter university. Yet the Hope commission said it was

disquieted by the common complaint that the graduates of our schools have often failed to attain an acceptable standard of English ... University and secondary school teachers complain that their students are unable to express ideas, either orally or in writing, in lucid, accurate, and fluent English. The criticism is echoed by employers who complain bitterly that young persons make errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and cannot express themselves logically and clearly in speaking.

Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, 1950

Plus ça change ..., as echoed in *Living and Learning*, the Hall-Dennis report of 1968:

Today, on every side, there is heard a growing demand for a fresh look at education in Ontario. The Committee was told of inflexible programs, outdated curricular [*sic*], unrealistic regulations, regimented organization, and mistaken aims of education. We heard from alienated students, frustrated teachers, irate parents and concerned educators. Many public organizations and private individuals have told us of their growing discontent and lack of confidence in a system which, in their opinion, has become outmoded and is failing those it exists to serve.

At the time it was released, *Living and Learning* was greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm and, as one of our presenters noted, was even “perceived as an instrument of emancipation from the confining, restrictive, suffocating practices of the past.”

Four years after Hall-Dennis, Douglas Myers, then a professor of education history at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, pointed out that in the 1960s, “education seemed to permeate all other social and political issues. It was a major growth industry, [becoming] the largest single budget item in the public sector.” But by 1972, as Myers makes clear, the atmosphere was already one of “disenchantment and scepticism.”

... *plus c'est pareil*. The Hope report was buried without comment or action, while only two-thirds of Hall and Dennis’s recommendations were dealt with at all by the government that had appointed them. Some were implemented only in part, and fully a third were never addressed – despite which, many people have scapegoated the report for all the alleged failures of Ontario schooling in the past quarter century.

We have tried to learn from the experiences of our distinguished predecessors, and have included a final chapter on how our recommendations can be implemented, in order to save this report from the unkind fate that befell theirs.

But the search for excellence is by no means restricted to Ontario: it has been a universal pursuit. Even those systems we love to envy, such as those in Germany and Japan, are anxiously being re-examined. In fact, there are few jurisdictions in the industrialized world that have not agonizingly appraised and re-appraised their school systems over the past five decades – as is evident in the scores and scores of reports we examined.

Virtually all jurisdictions have tinkered and toyed with various aspects of their education systems, and just about every one is back at the drawing board at this very moment. In the United States, permanent education reform has become big business, not least because yesterday’s panaceas have become today’s problems – at least until tomorrow, when those old panaceas will be resurrected.

Given these and other complex realities, we began our work cautiously, aware of the pitfalls on all sides. But we finish the task with great excitement, believing that we have fashioned a compelling, practical vision of an effective learn-

ing culture. We are persuaded that if the recommendations we make are approached in a spirit of good will by the many stakeholders in Ontario who care about improving learning, that goal will be achieved.

Improving Ontario’s schools

Having examined how Ontario’s education system evolved to its present state, we were ready to learn how it could be improved. As part of this lesson, we looked at the nature of the process of change itself, and at how basic rules of change and innovation were frequently ignored or breached in the past.

In the first place, it would be prudent to remember that not all change is progress. It should also be said plainly, right at the outset, that the education system is notoriously difficult to change: a vast bureaucratic institution, almost by definition, it shifts only slowly and under very intense pressure. After all, in a province of ten million people, a system that requires more than 100,000 teachers and innumerable other grown-ups to maintain working-day control of some two million Ontario children cannot be turned around easily.

It is slowed further by the conflicting pressures placed on decision makers by countless stakeholders seeking to change some part of the system in their own interest, but coveting maintenance of the status quo for anyone else. This is true of parents, trustees, administrators, business groups, universities, teachers and teachers’ unions, faculties of education, and political parties. Missing from the list, of course, are students – though they, too, want and are entitled to a say in the future of Ontario education.

In considering how change happens in the education system, we found recent Ontario experience highly illuminating. In the early 1980s, the Conservative government of the day initiated major reviews of several key aspects of education, and began implementing substantial changes. No sooner had it been ejected from power, its recent reforms barely begun, than the new Liberal government started its own re-appraisals and changes. These, too, were only in the initial stages of the lengthy process of implementation when the new NDP government began putting its own stamp on schools in Ontario. Such changes simply reflect each government's confidence that it could and can improve on the work, not to say repair the damage, of its predecessors.

Alas, the process of serious change does not happen that way, and democratically elected governments have an obligation to understand the consequences of their actions. Changes that serve to bewilder families, demoralize teachers, confuse students, and alienate the community seem a rather excessive price to pay in the hot pursuit of education reform.

Whether better schools are really the key to Ontario's competitiveness in a harsh, new world seems to us debatable, at best. But surely a destabilized education system can be guaranteed not to help. If major efforts at reform are to be undertaken seriously, they must be planned meticulously, and must respond realistically to the dynamics of institutional and bureaucratic change.

News, both good and bad

We had the distinct advantage, as Commissioners, of hearing from thousands of our fellow citizens both within and outside the education establishment. We had long sessions

with specialists on all aspects of learning, and examined much of the voluminous mountains of research that are ceaselessly being generated around the world. We visited a goodly number of schools, and saw, across Ontario, many classrooms and many schools where learning of the most exciting, creative kind is already under way, where an attempt to cope with our astonishing times is being achieved. We have been delighted by schools in which youngsters were not only learning to know and to think, they were loving every moment of it. This report contains some of those stories, in the hope that they will inspire others to do even better.

We believe that, as a result, we emerged with a quite balanced overview of the present system and its future. It may be that ours is the era of the educational crises that so many generations before us feared they were facing: it is impossible to envision a time when huge new resources will be available to deal with the maladies the system faces, but there is a very real sense that social problems will not decline, putting even greater strains on schools. This Commission celebrates the rainbow that Canada has become, but we acknowledge that this increasing diversity adds new dimensions to the work of the school system.

Fears of permanent unemployment or, at best, underemployment, will continue to create anxiety for parents and students alike. Many people will continue to look to schools for vocational salvation, while the incessant pressure to be "competitive" will add to the tensions that afflict every part of the learning process. Technological change comes hurtling at us with such speed that it seems impossible to guess what tomorrow will demand and – more specifically for the Commission's purposes – how to prepare young people, and many not-so-young people, to cope with whatever it is that lies ahead.

Characterized by bureaucratic structures right out of the automobile assembly lines – with the same kinds of mass production techniques, work specialization, fragmented programs, standardized procedures, hierarchical authority, and compliant workers – our schools, miraculously and with remarkable effectiveness, have taken us through this century. But it seems unrealistic to believe that, without change, they can handle the challenges of the next. What has been acceptable, if not always outstanding, is now in real danger of failing unless it is dramatically re-shaped.

It is clear to us that neither now nor in the past have schools been the disasters some critics claim, or the triumphs some defenders insist they are. And we acknowledge that even if every one of our recommendations were scrupulously implemented, the same might well be true 25 years from now.

There are, in fact, many good reasons why schools will always disappoint to some degree or other. The fact is that there are no scientific solutions to the education crisis as we confess frankly, some of us innocently believed when we began this assignment.

First and foremost, schools are human enterprises attempting to develop and shape human minds and spirits, with all the imperfections and imprecisions that implies. While we agree that this is an era of scientific miracles and that the growth in knowledge is exponential, to this very moment, the world's leading experts – using all their passionate, erudite convictions – disagree on the way the human personality develops and how the mind learns. Nor should we disregard the diverse personal and collective value systems within which this process takes place.

Any school child who watched last night's television news can attest that, too often, there is little relationship between knowledge and wisdom. Given the fallibility of all human-made institutions, it is hard to fathom why schools, of all the precarious and fragile enterprises possible, are expected to be flawless, superior to all our other frail undertakings.

As society transfers ever-greater burdens and responsibilities to the education system, should we be particularly disappointed or surprised when it doesn't succeed where families, or communities, or social agencies, or religious organizations have failed?

Yet, in the name of realism, even as the Commission urges modest expectations, we find ourselves, at the end of our task, filled with a surprising but gratifying optimism about the enormous possibilities the future can offer – not will, but can – because success is by no means inevitable.

Our way into the future

We turn now to the key conclusions we have reached, the recommendations we believe are necessary, and suggest how they can be implemented most effectively and efficiently.

In seeking the best learning system possible for Ontario, we are not singling out or recommending any one of the

countless reform thrusts and movements that are the rage in educational systems across the developed world – whether outcome-based education, site-based management, reading recovery, phonemic awareness, effective schools, amalgamation of boards of education, authentic assessment, or the like. In fact, we have avoided certain terms because their meaning has been so clouded by disagreement or misunderstanding that we consider them to have been rendered useless; child-based learning, restructuring, and constructivism are good examples. It is obvious to us that if these, or a legion of others, were the panaceas many people believe are just waiting to be found, the world would already have discovered them.

It has been said that there is a simple solution to every complex problem – and that solution is invariably wrong. Magic buttons don't exist; magic buttons aren't real.

Almost every kind of reform has been ringingly endorsed and soundly condemned, in about equal measure and on the basis of equally serious research. While we single out and praise aspects of certain of these movements (not all, but some) – all change, it is worth repeating, is not progress – none seems to us to have the kind of paramount importance on which reform can be achieved.

Nonetheless, this Commission is confident that a high-quality, effective, lifelong learning system is a realistic possibility for this province. *It can be done!*

But – and it is a very substantial but – four key partners in the learning system must be willing to transform their roles and the relationships among them, if the system is to function as we are convinced it can. Those partners are the students, the teachers, the students' families, and the

We have concluded that a new, value-added force is necessary to make these recommendations achievable – one that, by its own momentum, can drive or move the process of

change and that has an impact on the role of the education system's key partners. The four engines constitute that driving force.

community. To use an increasingly familiar phrase, their roles must be re-invented.

Rather than simply basing our hopes on the more conventional tools of school reform, such as testing, remedial programs, or acceleration, we have concluded that there is a different approach to change, one that has a greater chance of success.

Because the traditional prescriptions never seem to result in significant change, we believe a value-added approach is called for. We see four driving forces as essential to major transformation of the system, to support key partners in playing the new roles we have suggested for them, and to drive the other reforms we recommend. Whether we call them “pillars” forming the foundation of a revamped system, “engines” that drive it, or “levers” that open it to greater forces, we are clear about their part in transforming the system.

The four engines are as follows: early childhood education, teacher development, information technology, and community education. That does not mean, of course, that we have nothing to say on the usual subjects: as readers will see, we offer recommendations on just about everything that impinges on the community's ability to make schools excellent learning institutions.

However, none of those recommendations is new: each of the changes we propose has been tried in one jurisdiction or another, yet major positive change has not resulted. But we have concluded that a new, value-added force is necessary to make these recommendations achievable – one that, by its own momentum, can drive or move the process of change

and that has an impact on the role of the education system's key partners. The four engines constitute that driving force.

Early childhood education

The first engine is early schooling, beginning at the age of 3. Children who come through a carefully planned process of early education gain enormously in competence, coping skills, and positive attitudes to learning. Excellent early childhood education enhances their understanding of the value and centrality of formal learning; it expands teachers' expectations of children's capacities and parents' expectations of teachers' one-on-one involvement with their children. Recent research shows that children, both those who are privileged and those who are disadvantaged, benefit from high-quality early schooling of this kind.

Teacher development

The second engine is the education and training of teachers. Their competence and self-confidence as learners, as professionals, as instructors, and as guides for their students would increase dramatically if they were part of a greatly improved process of initial preparation and on-going development.

It is axiomatic that you can't teach what you don't know, and if there are to be significant changes in curriculum and organization, there will have to be teacher support for the initiatives and for professional in-service. In the desire to change organizational structures and curriculum programs, we must not forget that education still involves individual teachers working with students, and getting them excited about learning. This human relationship is the essence of our schools, and the best place to focus our energies.

Information technology

Third, we have come to believe that both students and teachers would be more receptive to the entire learning process if information technology is integrated into, and seen as an essential part of, teaching and learning strategies. The new technology is not a substitute for teachers; used intelligently and guided by thoroughly prepared teachers, however, it is capable of re-shaping the traditional nature of both learning and teaching.

A study entitled *Prisoners of Time*, published in 1994 by the American National Education Commission on Time and

Learning, underscores the potentially liberating aspect of technology-enhanced learning:

The true promise of technology lies in the classroom. Technology makes it possible for today's schools to escape the assembly-line mentality of the factory model school. With emerging hardware and software, educators can personalize learning. Instead of the lock-step of lecture and laboratory, computers and other new telecommunications technologies make it possible for students to move at their own pace. Effective learning technologies have already demonstrated their ability to pique student interest and increase motivation, encouraging students not only to spend more of their own time in learning but also to be more deeply involved in what they are doing.

Community education

Finally, the entire learning process would be enormously strengthened if schools became genuinely community-based institutions. The school is part of the community, and the community includes the school. That is why it is imperative that social agencies, community and religious organizations, local businesses and trade unions, and community colleges and universities share the load, particularly the non-academic load, that has been thrust on our schools.

Such alliances would allow teachers to focus on their central tasks, namely teaching and learning, and to address the issues of curriculum overload and system over-extension. Community alliances would give the school access to resources, expertise, and services that would help in educating the greatest number of students, and would give the community a vital role in the life of its school.

In fact, we can go even further and assert that unless the concept of partnerships stops being mere conference-hall rhetoric and becomes part of the new reality of the education system, it is unreasonable to expect schools to meet their present, let alone their future, responsibilities.

We are convinced that these four engines or levers are the *sine qua non* of the system of the future. Together, they constitute a set of dynamic and interlocking forces with the synergy to propel reconstruction of the present system.

These engines or levers are intended to drive the crucial series of curricular changes that are at the heart of our proposed reforms. They are described in Volume II of this report, *Learning: Our Vision for Schools*. In it, we recommend what we have termed a curriculum for "literacies."

The curriculum

Having immediately posited the fundamental necessity of developing reading and writing literacy, and having described it as the first task of schooling, we have deliberately broadened the meaning of "literacy." We have insisted that in addition to skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, there must be literacy in the areas of science, group and interpersonal skills and values, and computer technology. The reader will quickly recognize our conviction that effective schools will surely develop in most young people a high level of dexterity and a deep level of comprehension across a variety of subject areas.

The school program we envisage begins at age 3 as an option, and becomes compulsory at age 6. It is a long-range learning plan, lasting through various academic and personal transitions, that provides each child with ever-increasing personal involvement, guidance, and career counselling from an interested educator. It goes into operation the day the child enters school and continues until the day that child graduates.

The plan is based on the human dimension of the learning system – above all, on students and teachers working productively together; families reinforcing the significance of what goes on in schools; teachers acting on the assumption that the family is an integral part of a student's school life; and the local and professional community sharing some of the increasingly onerous burdens that schools are being called on to carry.

It is a plan which insists that all teachers, parents, and students share clearly articulated definitions of what students are expected to achieve at various stages of their

The plan is based on the human dimension of the learning system – above all, on students and teachers working productively together; families reinforcing the significance of what goes on in schools; teachers acting on the assumption

that the family is an integral part of a student's school life; and the local and professional community sharing some of the increasingly onerous burdens that schools are being called on to carry.

schooling. And, because the community is an essential partner in the learning system, we envisage that it, too, must be informed about the degree of effectiveness with which schools are educating our young people.

Making change happen

How will these changes come to pass? The essence of the Commission's understanding of complex change is that it can happen only with direction and support from both the bottom up and the top down. Government to household, household to government, and with the many elements in between – all must work together if the system is to be transformed.

We are neither *naïfs* nor bleeding hearts. We understand perfectly well that what we are prescribing will not happen easily. None of our four “engines,” nor the vision they are meant to drive and support, is the simple solution the world has longed for these many decades. On the contrary, ours is a complex, long-term project, and would have to overcome obstacles – some quite intractable. None of this can be implemented tomorrow, though aspects could be introduced the day after tomorrow and begin the change process almost immediately.

In fact, significant initiatives can be taken without orders from the Ministry of Education and Training: parents, teachers, principals, trustees, administrators, universities, faculties of education, business people, and community agencies – all could begin the change process with little delay.

Implementation itself must be done sensitively, recognizing that, if carried out heedlessly, it would further destabilize an already fragile and precarious system. Parents will be

sceptical of major change unless they can see at least some immediate benefits. And, unless they are treated from the start as collaborators, teachers will resent yet another series of intrusions into their already harried lives.

While the entire reconstruction of the system would and must take many years, there have to be rapid, positive reforms, not just for their own sake but to convince the community that the effort is worth making. Entire new, credible public processes for monitoring and evaluating components of the changing system will have to be developed, to ensure that public accountability becomes a reality.

We do not minimize or disguise the challenge we are issuing. We stress that while each of the engines or levers is a driving force on its own, our vision will best be realized if all of them work in support one of the other. Children who don't have deeply motivated, caring, trained, experienced teachers are limited in what they can learn. Teachers whose students are not predisposed to learn, to embrace school as a welcome part of their lives, are limited in what they can teach. Schools with strategies that ignore the new information technologies are limited in their ability to make knowledge accessible and themselves relevant and interesting to future generations of children. And schools that are not organically connected to the communities, families, businesses, and health and social agencies around them are limited in their ability to cope with the needs of children.

In our view, the four engines or levers form a convincing strategy to assure the implementation of our vision of a better learning system. They hold the promise of overcoming great obstacles of alienated, distracted, passive youngsters; isolated, overburdened, unappreciated teachers; massive buildings that vividly reflect the way schools are cut off from both the real world outside their doors and the human communities around them.

Without these engines, our curriculum for literacies, and most of our other recommendations, will fail to shake up the system as it needs to be shaken. With them, and with their power to enhance and reinforce each other, significant changes can be made to education in Ontario – as this report shows. With them, we also believe, excellence and equity are possible.

As a human enterprise, no school system will ever be other than a work in progress. Like learning itself, school is both an end and a process. Nothing is neat and clean in

human endeavours, and learning is among the most complex of those. Even with the best will in the world – and it would be unrealistic to believe that good will always prevails – humans build their institutions like themselves: imperfectly. School, the seminal American educator John Dewey taught us long ago, is not only a preparation for life, it is life.

For the Love of Learning promises no rose gardens, no panaceas, no utopias. But, on the basis of what we learned by listening to the people of Ontario in their thousands, absorbing the research literature and the lessons and experiences of others, we are convinced we can offer the possibility of significant progress. The people of Ontario, blessed in so many ways, have a good school system. On that solid base, if they have the will, they can now forge as successful a learning culture as the world has yet known.

If they have the will.

The Royal Commission on Learning

Fulfilling the mandate of this Royal Commission required a whole host of activities. We examined the studies of Ontario schools that had preceded our own. We pulled together some of the research on education that has been done in recent years by scholars around the world. We met across the table with a large number of people with special expertise in the areas that we were finding most problematic.

And above all, we listened to our fellow Ontarians. Not only did we spend three months in public meetings, hearing submissions right across the province, each of us also spent time inside a series of schools. We reached out to young people, both those who had done well in our education system and those who had done less well, so that we could hear their views first-hand. We made a point of locating and spending time with some parents who we knew would not be comfortable making formal presentations to us. We received thousands of written submissions either by post or e-mail, and many others on our voice-mail.

It wasn't always easy to discern consensus in the midst of all these voices. But they left no doubt about one thing: the citizens of this province are passionately interested in their education system.

On May 4, 1993, in response to increasing concern among educators, members of the public, and the Government of Ontario, the Honourable Dave Cooke, Minister of Education and Training, announced the establishment of the Royal Commission on Learning.

According to the Order in Council that created the Commission, the government had identified the need “to set new directions in education to ensure that Ontario youth are well prepared for the challenges of the 21st century.” Our mandate was “to present a vision and action plan to guide Ontario’s reform of elementary and secondary education.”

The government identified four issues for us to consider: a coherent “vision” of the system, the educational programs of Ontario schools, the accountability for results, and the governance of the system.

Public consultation

Our first priority was to seek the views of the people of Ontario. We consulted with as many individuals and groups as possible, both in and outside the school system; we visited schools and acted on several outreach strategies; and we used the opportunities provided by the media and computer-based town-hall meetings to involve, and hear from, interested people who addressed the four issues – and much more.

Talking to people

We began by developing an information brochure, “Learning,” which explained the task we had been given and invited people and groups to participate, listing a schedule of formal public hearings throughout the province.

We placed ads in local newspapers inviting people to our hearings. We issued press releases and discussed our mission with journalists, and had special mailouts for women’s groups, ethno-cultural associations, and groups for the disabled. We reached thousands of people.

In the fall of 1993, for 12 weeks, 1,396 groups and individuals in 27 cities across the province made oral submissions. Parents, teachers, students, trustees, and school administrators came, as did representatives of the business community, francophone groups, multicultural organizations, aboriginal groups, unions, colleges, and universities. We also heard from, among others, librarians, social workers, police officers, doctors, and members of religious groups, and many others – with views they wanted to share. Most presenters also submitted written briefs to support their positions. Many presenters were passionate and articulate, knowledgeable and persuasive.

To get a better view of Ontario education today, we first spent a week in a number of schools and regularly, over subsequent months, visited other schools where interesting and innovative projects are under way.

Media coverage

During the 12 weeks of public hearings, we spoke hundreds of times to newspaper, radio, and television reporters and received widespread coverage in the media, engaging thousands of Ontarians in a crucial debate about the future of Ontario’s education system.

Several of the public hearings were taped by local cable TV stations and rebroadcast across the province during the winter of 1993–94, and we participated in a number of tele-

vision broadcasts devoted exclusively to the Royal Commission and its work.

The Baton Broadcasting System, an Ontario television network with stations in North Bay, Ottawa, Toronto, and Sudbury, made an hour of air-time available to the Commission for a call-in show that was seen by more than 100,000 viewers in December 1993, a short time after we completed our public hearings.

TVOntario and La Chaîne Française also helped us involve more Ontarians in the issue by airing an “Education Summit” in January 1994. Commissioners participated in a number of panel discussions and other programs in English and in French during the week-long summit, reaching thousands more viewers. The French-language broadcasts were particularly helpful in bringing fresh points of view to the Commission on issues surrounding French-language education.

One newspaper article in particular, by Michael Valpy in the *Globe and Mail* (October 2, 1993), provoked widespread reaction. After he spent a week visiting schools in eastern Ontario with one of the Commission co-chairs, he wrote about “the 40 percent factor” – his estimate of the number of children who come to school each day with some non-academic disadvantage that impedes learning: poverty, abusive or indifferent parents, hunger, emotional anxiety, or something else. Valpy’s article was often quoted during the hearings, in conversations with teachers and principals, and we saw it pinned up on numerous bulletin boards in the schools we visited.

Outreach

Intense public interest in education produced a flood of submissions: more than 1,500 written briefs and audio/video cassettes were received at the Commission’s offices, and more than 350 individuals used our special 1-800 number to make oral submissions. In addition, more than 1,500 messages were posted to a special Royal Commission on Learning computer conference on TVOnline/ChaiNET, TVOntario’s/La Chaîne’s prototype bulletin board.

The Commission also published two bilingual editions of *Spotlight on Learning*, to keep interested people up to date on the Commission’s activities, and to explore some of the most pressing issues in the education community. Fifty thousand copies of each *Spotlight* were distributed across the province to education stakeholders, parents, and others.

In addition to the hearings – at which people came to talk to the Commission – we went out, individually or in small groups, to talk to people. We held meetings with immigrant groups, and with parents, staff, and teachers at schools, in communities as diverse as downtown Toronto and Moosonee; tele-conferenced with people in Timmins; and video-conferenced with people from the francophone ethno-cultural communities in Toronto and Ottawa.

As well as learning from students and student groups across Ontario, we broadened the Commission’s reach by setting up kiosks in malls across the province. We chose malls because young people, especially, tend to congregate in them, so that we could hear opinions and discuss education with those who might not otherwise have participated. As a result, 1,200 people in Ottawa, Windsor, Sault Ste. Marie, and Toronto took the opportunity to share their views on education.

Under the direction of a youth outreach co-ordinator and a commissioner, a volunteer team was trained to meet with youth in schools and in such non-school environments as community centres and video arcades. Across the province, some students took the initiative, surveying large numbers of their peers, thereby giving us input from literally thousands of others.

Commissioners, staff, and volunteers also visited detention centres, jails, homes for pregnant teens, multi-service agencies, and cultural organizations in 36 meetings and focus groups.

Experts and research

Following the public hearings, the Commission consulted a broad range of experts in education: professors of education, child psychiatrists, psychologists, policy analysts, and others.

Throughout the Commission's existence, our research staff conducted an extensive review of relevant literature and studies. In addition, the Commission itself heard expert opinions, and commissioned policy papers in areas where we needed further information.

The Commissioners and research staff also met with educators from Ontario and from other Canadian provinces, as well as from the United States and other jurisdictions.

Commissioners' meetings

After the public consultation, talking to people, media coverage, outreach activities, hearing the opinions of experts, and pondering a mountain of research, we then set out on our next and most daunting task: to articulate what we saw and heard, debate among ourselves the many contentious and complex issues before us, and begin to translate our understandings, opinions, and convictions into this Report.

Education and Society

Regarding Ryerson through our backward prism
We find no madness in his Methodism,
But see in all those works he left behind
The logic of his energetic mind.
The House he built remains – though renovated
By many hands, as previously related;
Some minister, concerned to waterproof,
Deciding that he needs to raise the roof
Whereafter his successor with disdain
Decides she ought to lower it again.
Yet still there stands the ever open door
And cross the threshold still the children pour.
The teachers still their expertise bestow
And still the generations come and go.
And on foundations that still stand secure
The House that Ryerson built will endure.

Hugh Oliver, from *The House That Ryerson Built*

En repassant, comme il m'arrive souvent, ces temps-ci, par mes années de jeune institutrice, dans une école de garçons, en ville, je revis, toujours aussi chargé d'émotion, le matin de la rentrée. J'avais la classe des tout-petits. C'était leur premier pas dans un monde inconnu. À la peur qu'ils en avaient tous plus ou moins, s'ajoutait, chez quelques-uns de mes petits immigrants, le désarroi, en y arrivant, de s'entendre parler dans une langue qui leur était étrangère.

(...) Et je remarquai enfin qu'il avait presque une attitude de priant quand, après avoir écrit ses lettres, il s'accordait pendant un moment de les contempler. Quelle histoire écrivait-il donc, sans avoir besoin pour la connaître de pouvoir la lire?

Peu à peu me venait à l'idée qu'il n'était pas commandé seulement de lui-même dans son acharnement à écrire. Mais peut-être par une faim lointaine. Une mystérieuse et longue attente.

Gabrielle Roy, dans *Ces enfants de ma vie*

In the next chapter, we record just some of the views of education in Ontario today that we heard; but first, we take a brief look over our shoulders, to see whether this is a unique moment in the history of education in Canada, or simply part of a recurring ebb and flow of issues and themes.

First, we begin with a brief history of Ontario's public education system, highlighting the architecture of "the house that Ryerson built." Second, we examine the more recent history of educational policy to find out how the current system evolved. Third, we describe current socio-economic and demographic realities that affect the education system, and briefly examine funding. Fourth, we provide some descriptive statistics concerning the size and complexity of the Ontario school system as well as indicators of the state of the system. Finally, we look at the current national and international context for education reform.

Education in Ontario: A brief history

The history of schooling in Ontario has been written and rewritten many times and from many perspectives. As Professor Rebecca Coulter of the University of Western Ontario points out, the earliest histories (at least those written in English) document what was seen as the "glorious growth and progress of schooling,"¹ whereas some recent attempts take a more critical stance, exploring the ways in which schools have acted as agents of social control, and how they have operated to replicate class, language, ethnic, and gender relations. French-language historians have documented the development and struggles of schooling for the

Franco-Ontarian community,² a topic that has been given little attention by English-language writers.

When Ontario's school system was being established, few doubted that religion and schooling belonged together. The Roman Catholic Church was instrumental in starting French-language education in the 17th century; in the 19th century, the Anglican Church, led by the Reverend Dr. John Strachan, who was president of the General Board of Education, established English-language instruction for small numbers of children in the settlement at York, with the emphasis on grammar schools for the preparation of potential leaders of the community. Other religious groups, Methodists especially, promoted the concept of a basic education for all the children in the colony.

Individual parents played a strong role in early education, securing the services of itinerant teachers, or choosing one of their own to drill their children in the three Rs. Often the impetus for this initiative came from the fourth R – religion – with local ministers reminding their flocks (in a largely Protestant population) of their duty to ensure that their progeny could read, understand, and follow the Bible.

Parental attempts to secure a modicum of education for their children got a boost in 1816 when some limited provision was made for government assistance. Professor Willard Brehaut notes: "As this support movement was extended, evidence of greater public control began to appear. Throughout Ontario's history, as in that of other jurisdictions, public support and public control have tended to go hand-in-hand."³

denominational systems would undermine a strong public system. Grammar schools received some public support as early as 1807 but, despite Ryerson's intentions, did not come under effective public control until 1871.

Compulsory and free

For many years, attendance in public schools was not mandatory. School fees, problems of transportation and travel, and the necessity of children's sharing chores in a rural wilderness made regular school attendance difficult. Not until 1891 were children between the ages of 8 and 14 compelled to attend school with penalties for parents or guardians who did not comply with the law; in 1919, the age was extended to 16.

Elementary school fees were eliminated in 1871 and, with that move, a barrier to access to education fell; secondary school fees were not dropped until half a century later. Both initiatives were accompanied by greater provincial regulation of schooling in the form of compulsory attendance laws.

Compulsory attendance at both school levels brought with it the problem of how to change the curriculum to meet the needs of widening segments of society.

Because it was obvious that many children were neither able nor willing to follow the traditional academic program offered at the secondary school level, it became necessary to offer a variety of programs and courses to meet the needs of a vastly increased number. To this end, manual training, domestic science, and other courses were introduced and later, technical and vocational schools were established.⁵

However, one effect of this type of differentiated programming was that young people were being sorted according to their socio-economic origins, which prevented them from moving beyond them.

Role and qualifications of teachers

In 1850, when Ontario first adopted official standards for qualifying teachers, the requirements were minimal: candidates were expected to read, spell, write, and to have some knowledge of geography and the basic rules of grammar. The highly variable quality of teachers of the time had prompted Ryerson, in 1847, to establish the first "normal" school, located in Toronto, for the instruction of teachers in the common schools. Ottawa was the site of Ontario's

The Common School Act

In the 1840s, the school system was shaped, to a considerable degree, by a series of school acts, beginning with the Common School Act of 1841, which doubled the size of government grants in aid of schools, and introduced compulsory taxes on property as a means of funding elementary schools. In the early 1840s, a General Board of Education was established for the province and consisted of the superintendent and six advisors. By the end of the 1840s, the stage had been set for the centralized administration of schools, with regulations covering organization, classification of teachers, and prescription of textbooks.

One Methodist adherent in particular was key in making a wider view of public education at least a partial reality in his day: Egerton Ryerson, who served as Ontario's superintendent of education from 1844 until 1876. Ryerson was steadfast in his support of a public education system that had a distinctly Christian, but non-denominational, basis.

The Roman Catholic Church established the first English-language Roman Catholic class in Kingston in 1839.⁴ From the beginning, the question of separate schools engendered considerable political debate. The Scott Act of 1863 provided more formal recognition and support to Catholic education, allowing for the election of separate school trustees as well as legislative grants to separate schools. The Constitution Act, 1867, confirmed that all provisions in place for denominational schools at the time of Confederation would remain in force and could not be diminished.

Ryerson had rigorously opposed any extension of funding to Roman Catholic grammar (what we now know as secondary) schools, on the grounds that money given to

second normal school, which opened in 1875. (The term “normal school” was used well into the 1950s, when it was changed to “teachers’ college.”)

During the middle and late 1800s, the province also experimented with “county model schools” for teacher training, which offered a lower standard of teacher certification; however, these were closed by 1907. Like the Ontario education system in general, teacher preparation of this period was characterized by strong central regulation⁶

Manuals described in detail how normal school subjects were to be taught, and the provincial education department was also responsible for setting and marking final examinations for teacher candidates.

The organization and status of teaching was, for the most part, the result of work by the teachers’ professional associations. Their importance was recognized by 1944, when the province enacted the Teaching Profession Act, granting teachers automatic membership in the Ontario Teachers’ Federation and in one of its five affiliates. (Unlike those in some other provinces, the two Ontario associations for teachers in public English-language elementary schools are still split along gender lines.)

A growing system

The one-room schoolhouse was the model of Ontario education for generations, Ryerson’s efforts to promote enlarged school areas notwithstanding. For generations local governance consisted of a three-man (“three fit and discreet men”) board of trustees.

With an eye on efficiency and equality of opportunity, successive governments slowly developed larger administrative units, culminating in 1969 when the amalgamation of more than two thousand small school boards brought the number to slightly more than 190, most using the provincial county system as the administrative unit. It was at this point that the one-room schoolhouse, relic of Ontario’s pioneer past, finally became part of history.

Curriculum and teaching methods

In the earliest days of education in the province, rote memorization, often of meaningless material, was commonplace. Teachers assigned a great deal but taught little until the advent of graded texts approved by the government, which

permitted teachers to group students according to age and to their understanding of the texts being covered.

The curriculum of the pioneer school dealt with the three Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic) and a fourth R, religion: reading texts frequently used were the Bible and various religious tracts. With the introduction of standard texts, teaching and learning methods changed. Through his *Journal of Education*, Ryerson was a primary proponent of these new methods, and in 1851 he established the Educational Depository, which made teaching aids, books, and lesson guides available to schools and libraries.

In time, the Ministry centralized provincial curriculum and authorized texts through *Circular 14*, a list of textbooks approved for use in Ontario schools.

Education rights of the French-language minority

French-language schools in Ontario go back more than 300 years, to 1634, when a school for Native children was established in Huronia (the area around present-day Midland). Schools for the children of French settlers followed later in the century, beginning with a class in Fort Cataraqui (now Kingston) in 1676.

Until the late 19th century, French- and English-language schools were financed in the same way and enjoyed the same status. Because most were Roman Catholic, they were subject to the same rules and restrictions as their English-language counterparts and received no funding past Grade 10.

Disputes about French-language instruction were a constant feature of Ontario education. Although the British North America Act provided protection for the rights of

francophones, these rights proved to be somewhat fragile. Following Confederation and into the early years of the 20th century, the province curtailed the rights of Franco-Ontarians; as a minority group, they lacked the power exercised by the English-language majority.

When Regulation 17 was passed in 1912, restricting teaching in French to Grades 1 and 2, Franco-Ontarians immediately organized strong resistance, led by the Association canadienne-française de l'éducation de l'Ontario. Although in effect only until 1927, Regulation 17 was not repealed until 1944. This struggle was a defining event for the Franco-Ontarian community, providing it with an initial focus for demands for educational rights, and control over their own schools.

Questions of purpose

The debate about the purposes of schooling was born with the schools themselves. Was it training for work, for individual fulfilment, as a preparation for citizenship, to infuse a sense of patriotism, to support the Christian ethic, or simply because of the intrinsic value of a liberal education? Not only were there disagreements about purpose, but each of these distinct purposes was defined very differently at different times.

A researcher observes:

Over the course of the last 150 years, the schools have been used for several purposes. In important senses, almost all people agree that schools are suitable places to build character, to engage in initiatives to improve the world, to teach citizenship and to prepare the young for work and life. The disagreements have arisen in debates, however muted, about what kind of character, what kind of social

reform/justice, what form of citizenship, and what kind of work education. In seeking to achieve one or more of these purposes, the question has been whether we want to create young people who will fit seamlessly into the existing society or whether we want graduates who will challenge their world and work for change.⁷

Although sharing this general ambiguity of purposes relating to the wider goals of schooling, Roman Catholic and French-language schools have always had the specific purposes of maintaining religious and/or linguistic identities in the midst of a large majority of (until recently) Protestant and English-speaking people.

We turn now to recent educational policy in Ontario in order to understand how the publicly funded system has met the challenges of the past 30 years.

More recent educational history

Living and Learning: *The Hall-Dennis report*

In 1965, following a massive expansion of the school system, the Department of Education responded to the ferment about social and educational issues with the Hall-Dennis report, published in 1968. The report, vastly different from any previous government-sponsored document on education, sought to modernize the education system so that it would be able to address the needs of both the student as an individual and of society as a whole.

An academic commented at the time on this dual emphasis:

This emphasis may be seen as an attempt to counterbalance two possible tendencies in education: the reflection of a collectivist view of man [*sic*], and the imposition of a single pattern of schooling (in manner and content) on all children, regardless of individual differences.⁸

A contemporary commentator said that in the report, “the child and, to a large extent the teacher, occupy the centre of the stage, with the subjects, the administrators, and the experts relegated to supporting roles.”⁹ Among the report’s 258 recommendations were calls for a curriculum more closely related to students’ experiences, a decrease in rote learning, and an increase in parental and community involvement in schools. Some of these recommendations remain controversial issues. Lloyd Dennis, co-chair of the Hall-Dennis Inquiry, believes key elements of the report were never treated seriously by the government of the day.

Elementary schools

As recently as 1967, *Curriculum P1, J1*, the Department of Education's key policy document for education in Grades 1 through 6, stated that the aims of education, first promulgated in 1937, were still applicable. It declared that "the schools of Ontario exist for the purpose of preparing children to live in a democratic society that bases its way of life upon the Christian ideal," and described the relationship of the individual to society as follows:

From each individual a democratic society expects the finest service of which he is capable and a willingness to make sacrifices for the common welfare. It demands that he recognize and accept his responsibility to act not only in the interest of self but in the interest of all ... Co-operation in a democratic group requires self-control, intelligent self-direction, and the ability to accept responsibility.¹⁰

It went on to outline the "threefold task" of the school: to help the child to understand the nature of the environment in which he or she lives; to lead the child "to choose and accept as his own those ideals of conduct and endeavour that a Christian and democratic society approves," and to assist the pupil to master the essential abilities for living in a modern society. The 1967 document did, however, point out that the Hall-Dennis report, anticipated the next year, might be expected to lead to major changes.

In 1975, the Ministry issued *The Formative Years*, and a support document, *Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions*, which gave teachers new directions for elementary education. It pointed out that:

The experiences of these early years mould the child's attitudes to learning and provide the basic skills and impetus for his [sic] continuing progress ... It is the policy of the Government of Ontario that every child have the opportunity to develop as completely as possible in the direction of his or her talents and needs.¹¹

In his introductory statement to *The Formative Years*, the then-Minister of Education, Thomas Wells, asked all teachers, administrators, trustees, and parents to "remember ... always that the individual child in the classroom is the ultimate reason for the existence of our schools."

This concern about the individual was further emphasized in such statements as "the philosophical commitment of our society [is] to the worth of the individual"; moreover,

The curriculum will provide opportunities for each child (to the limit of his or her potential):

- to acquire the basic skills fundamental to his or her continuing education;
- to develop and maintain confidence and a sense of self-worth;
- to gain the knowledge and acquire the attitudes that he or she needs for active participation in Canadian society;
- to develop the moral and aesthetic sensitivity necessary for a complete and responsible life.

The Formative Years, 1975

one of the major goals of education was described as to help each child "to develop and maintain confidence and a sense of self-worth." The document also said that, under a new policy, education should be conducted in a way that would not limit children's opportunities by sex-role stereotyping them.

The Formative Years also drew attention to the need for careful curriculum planning by individual teachers, by groups of teachers and by school staffs collectively, in order to ensure that the overall curriculum achieved a consistent focus and eliminated excessive repetition and overlap. It also pointed out that parents, as well as the children themselves, should be involved in the planning process in appropriate ways, and that supervisory officers and principals have a responsibility for providing leadership in planning.

The document outlined specific objectives in terms of providing children with "opportunities to acquire competence" in certain areas at the end of the Primary and Junior Divisions, rather than identifying outcomes or levels of competence to be achieved. In addition to objectives in language and mathematics that were listed for each division separately, it also identified objectives for areas such as music, drama, visual arts, physical education and health, science, and geography, which had been part of elementary education for some time, as well as new areas such as the individual and society, decision-making, values, perception and expression, and Canadian Studies, which clearly flowed from the recommendations of the Hall-Dennis report, *Living and Learning*.

Ten Essential “Learning Outcomes”

By the end of Grade 9, students will:

- be able to use language to think, learn, and communicate effectively;
- be able to use mathematical knowledge and skills effectively;
- be able to apply scientific methods and knowledge in understanding the world, solving problems, and making responsible decisions;
- be able to use a wide variety of technologies effectively;
- be able to apply historical and geographical knowledge in analysing world events and understanding different cultures;
- show a commitment to peace, social justice, and the protection of the environment in their own community, Canada, and the world;
- have the skills needed to get along well with other people, show respect for human rights, and practise responsible citizenship;
- find satisfaction and purpose in work and learning, and plan properly for entering the work force or continuing their education;
- appreciate, enjoy, and participate in the arts;
- build healthy lifestyles and relationships.

The Common Curriculum, 1993

The Formative Years and its support document continued to set the direction for elementary education until they were replaced by *The Common Curriculum* in 1993.

Secondary schools

For more than a hundred years, the debate about the formal education of adolescents has focused particularly on the best ways to bridge the last years of elementary and the early years of secondary school, the relevance of the curriculum to students with very different needs, and the extent to which schools and programs should be tailored to academic and vocational outcomes.

In the 1930s, experiments that involved combining Grades 7 and 8 (and, sometimes, 9 as well) into one organizational and administrative unit, in order to better serve the

needs of adolescents, reached their peak. But political opposition from teacher federations, and the implications such groupings would have if funding of the separate school system were ever to be extended, forestalled this as a general model.

In 1950, the Department of Education directed school boards to create committees of teachers from Grades 7 to 10, to plan “local instructional programs for the Intermediate Division” but these were largely ineffective. In the 1950s, however, a limited number of junior high schools were established.

The 1961 *Program of Study for Secondary Schools* (named the “Robarts Plan”) reorganized secondary education into three programs of equal status: arts and sciences; business and commerce; science, technology, and trades. Students were streamed into one of three options: a five-year program leading to university; a four-year program leading to entry into employment at the end of Grade 12, or to the new system of colleges of Applied Arts and Technology; and a two-year program designed for direct employment after age 16.

Robarts’s successor as Minister of Education, William Davis, replaced the Robarts Plan with *Circular H.S.1: Recommendations and Information for Secondary School Organization Leading to Certificates and Diplomas 1969–70*. It organized programs into four areas of study: communications, social sciences, pure and applied sciences, and arts, and gave students a wide choice of subjects.

The circular also introduced the system under which students are awarded a credit for each subject completed in a school year, allowing them to advance in that subject to the next year; any subjects failed must be repeated. This means that students are promoted in subjects, not grades. A certain number of credits had to be earned in order to attain a Grade 12 diploma, and an additional six credits for the Honours Graduation Grade 13 Diploma. In place of two-, four-, and five-year streams, subjects were organized at four levels of difficulty: advanced, general, basic, and modified.

A scant four years later, *Secondary School Diploma Requirements H.S.1 1974–75* stipulated that there would be more compulsory credits (nine) and fewer student choices.

A paper by several researchers, looking back at Ontario education in the mid-1970s, points out that

“Never lose sight of the fact that the child as the learner is not only the centre of the school system but the only reason for its existence.”

Robert W.B. Jackson,

Final Report of the Commission on Declining Enrolments, 1978

central control [had been] reasserted. The age of expansion was over. Issues of declining enrolment, reduction in the funding available for education, and an oversupply of teachers led to a mood of pessimism.¹²

That pessimism brought with it renewed criticism of secondary education and, in response, in April 1980 Minister of Education Bette Stephenson established the Secondary Education Review Project (SERP).

Based on the SERP report and on reaction to a Ministry response, *The Renewal of Secondary Education* (ROSE), in 1982 the Ministry released *Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions* (OSIS), to be implemented in 1984. It emphasized the need to improve the transition between elementary and secondary schools, and to encourage students to stay in school. It suggested that courses be offered at three (instead of four) levels of difficulty – basic, general, and advanced – and that they be designed specifically to meet the needs of students in basic and general classes, rather than offering watered-down versions of advanced-level courses.

In the mid-1980s Premier David Peterson was concerned about what he considered an unacceptably high drop-out rate for Ontario students. He commissioned George Radwanski, then an editor of the *Toronto Star*, to review the problem. Radwanski's report, the *Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts*, published in 1987, concluded that the education system had become irrelevant in an economy where the emphasis was shifting from manufacturing to services; moreover, many students were uninterested in what they were being taught at school, and they lacked appropriate skills and knowledge.¹³

He developed a series of recommendations designed to increase the percentage of students completing high school: early childhood education; province-wide standardized testing to identify learning needs; a shift to outcomes-based education; “destreaming” of high schools; and the abolition of the credit system in favour of a common core curriculum.

Though several of Radwanski's key recommendations were not implemented, the following changes have taken place since his report was released:

- Destreaming, under which all students are taught together rather than being separated according to their abilities, is now being implemented in Grade 9.

- The Ministry's *Common Curriculum, Grades 1–9* (1993), initiated a province-wide discussion on outcomes-based education – in which the focus is on what is actually learned. The curriculum is built around four areas – language; the arts; maths, science, and technology; and the self and society.
- A number of tests are being administered at provincial and national levels.

Declining enrolments

If the mid-1960s had been a time of new and challenging ideas, the mid-1970s were years of caution and retrenchment: in the wake of financial constraints imposed by the provincial government, school boards were forced to make difficult decisions about closing schools and laying off teachers.

Most school boards were facing the effects of the declining enrolments that resulted from the declining birth rate after the “baby boom.”¹⁴ In 1978, in *The Final Report of the Commission on Declining School Enrolments in Ontario*, Robert Jackson made clear how substantial the decline and its probable consequences would be on school organization, staffing, and funding. However, by the time the number of students in secondary schools began to drop, enrolment began to stabilize at the elementary level. Student numbers have remained stable for the last several years and are now projected to increase slightly over the next decade.

Major legislation in the 1980s

Bill 82 and special education

In 1980, Bill 82, which made school boards responsible for providing programs and services for students in need of

The Goals of Education consist of helping each student to:

1. develop a responsiveness to the dynamic process of learning;
2. develop resourcefulness, adaptability, and creativity in learning and living;
3. acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to comprehend and express ideas through words, numbers, and other symbols;
4. develop physical fitness and good health;
5. gain satisfaction from participating and from sharing the participation of others in various forms of artistic expression;
6. develop a feeling of self-worth;
7. develop an understanding of the role of the individual within the family and the role of the family within society;
8. acquire skills that contribute to self-reliance in solving practical problems in everyday life;
9. develop a sense of personal responsibility in society at the local, national, and international levels;
10. develop esteem for the customs, cultures, and beliefs of a wide variety of societal groups;
11. acquire skills and attitudes that will lead to satisfaction and productivity in the world of work;
12. develop respect for the environment and a commitment to the wise use of resources;
13. develop values related to personal, ethical, or religious beliefs and to the common welfare of society.

OSIS (Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions), 1984

special education, had a tremendous impact on schools. Many children who had previously been cared for or educated in other institutions or who had never gone to school, entered the school system. Many teachers had to develop new skills to deal with the needs of children they had not encountered previously. And many trustees, as well as school and board administrators, had to make provisions for large numbers of students whose educational needs they had not heretofore been required to meet.

A significant number of health and psycho-social service professionals became part of the school system. To some extent, the system also had to adjust to a much higher level of advocacy by parents and groups representing students with special needs.

Bill 30 and extension of funding of Roman Catholic secondary schools

In 1984, Premier Davis announced his government's intention to publicly fund Roman Catholic separate schools beyond Grade 10 to graduation level; two years later the legislation, Bill 30, was passed in the Legislature with the support of all three parties.

In 1984, Mr. Davis also announced that commissions were being established to report on implementation of the extended funding and on funding issues in general, as well as on the specific question of funding for private schools.

Bill 75 and French-language governance

In 1986, Bill 75 introduced legislation under which the Franco-Ontarian community was given responsibility for French-language education, although with limited decision-making powers. The French-language sections within existing school boards, with trustees specifically elected to them, have some measure of independence from both the anglophone public and the anglophone Roman Catholic sections. In 1991, the report of the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group (also known as the Cousineau report) recommended criteria under which several French-language governance structures, including French-language school boards, would give the province's francophones full control of their own system. This report has not yet been implemented.

We think it is very important that every child have access to high quality early childhood education and that all less advantaged children who can benefit from its preventive and remedial effects do so.

Fourth Report of the Select Committee on Education,
June 1990

Financing education

In 1985, one of the commissions established by Premier Davis, and headed by H. Ian Macdonald, issued *The Report of the Commission on the Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education*. It examined the adequacy and distribution of school funding, both provincial and local, as well as such issues as fiscal accountability, and alternative methods of financing to overcome existing disparities and inequities. Its 54 recommendations were built on three principles: education is primarily a provincial responsibility; the quality of education should be maintained or enhanced; and the province should strive towards the goal of equal educational opportunity for all.

The commission recommended the sharing of commercial and industrial taxes by public and Roman Catholic boards in the same geographic area, further consolidation of public school boards, the creation of co-operative service units (e.g., shared busing or payroll systems), a review of programs and funding, and a system of province-wide collective bargaining for teachers.

While the recommendation that commercial and industrial taxes be shared is being implemented, certain issues (consolidation of school boards in some regions, for example) continue to be contentious. Other measures – including the idea of sharing busing, administrative purchasing, computer use, audio-visual resources, athletic facilities, and professional development activities – are being carried out by some boards and being investigated by others. The question of province-wide bargaining for teachers has not been pursued at all.¹⁵

Legislative reports

Between 1988 and 1990, the Select Committee on Education, an all-party group of members of the Legislature, prepared four reports, all of which attempted to grapple with a range of issues relating to education and broader social needs, reflecting concerns about such issues as race, language, family violence, and child abuse.¹⁶

The Committee also called for reforms to educational funding policies to make them simpler and more effective, and for smaller class sizes. In 1988, the Ministry stipulated that Grade 1 and 2 classes must not exceed 20 students, with the downsizing to be phased in over several years. The

Ministry also established the Education-Finance Reform Project, to re-examine funding.

The Select Committee also considered issues related to early childhood education, including junior and senior kindergarten, the drop-out rate, and destreaming, and urged improvement of inter-ministerial co-ordination of policies and programs dealing with children. It also suggested that the Ministry work with faculties of education to restructure and enhance teacher training in regard to young children.

Premier's council

Two reports dealing with the apparent connection between education and the consequences of today's globalized economy were published by the Premier's Council, which includes representatives from business, labour, education, and community organizations. *Competing in the New Global Economy* (1988) and *People and Skills in the New Global Economy* (1990) consider Ontario's place in the world market, and attempt to analyze the policies needed to protect the province's relative prosperity. Like other similar documents, these take for granted a cause-and-effect relation between schooling and prosperity that, as we'll soon see, is asserted rather than demonstrated.

As well, a committee of the Premier's Council on Health, Well-Being, and Social Justice published a report, *Yours, Mine, and Ours* (1994) on children, including education issues as they relate to larger questions of children's healthy development and growth.

Public funding to private schools

The issue of extending public funding to private schools continues to be raised in the courts and hotly debated among groups and in the media. Although the *Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario*¹⁷ (the Shapiro Commission) recommended in 1985 that religious schools be allowed to apply for “associate” status with local school boards, the recommendation has not been adopted. Court challenges to current funding arrangements have been unsuccessful, most recently in an Ontario court decision handed down in July 1994.¹⁸

Anti-racism and ethno-cultural equity initiatives

In 1993, Bill 21 amended the Education Act to give the Minister power to have school boards develop anti-racism and ethno-cultural equity plans, which would require Ministerial approval, and then to implement those plans. In addition, the Ministry began to implement some of the education-related elements of Stephen Lewis’s *Report on Race Relations*, including his recommendation that an assistant deputy minister for Anti-Racism, Equity, and Access be appointed.

The significance of recent policy changes

In order to place educational reform in its proper context, we need to look, however briefly, at the changes to educational policy in Ontario, particularly over the past eight to ten years. During that time, various governments have, among them, created a plethora of task forces and inquiries (some already mentioned), which recommended, among other changes, reducing class size in early grades, restructur-

ing schooling to accommodate review and consultation at all levels, destreaming, implementation of anti-violence and anti-racist policies, and employment and pay equity. Recently, the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) identified four fundamental elements for setting policy: equity, excellence, accountability, and partnership.

Over the years, some recommendations have been transformed into policy, but these initiatives have not always been either consistent or carried into practice. As a result, they have often been perceived as somewhat random or unrelated, rather than as parts of a rational vision of what education should be. Many educators who spoke to the Commission said that policies are perceived as a patchwork rather than as a coherent framework for educating students.

The changes, combined with funding cuts, have created what some believe is a “war zone” between MET and many school boards. This is complicated by a sense that non-educators in government have taken the lead in making policy. School board trustees and administrators often feel that politicians and bureaucrats with little professional expertise have undue influence in this field, and the result has been a loss of confidence in the Ministry.

Reflecting on change

What began as an educational system for a privileged few has, over the years, become a system for the many – although there is clear evidence that those who enter it from privileged backgrounds still benefit most. Because schools matter so greatly in shaping the destiny of each child, they have always been the focus of intense, often unfriendly, attention. Criticisms of the system have always been abundant, and the targets of dissatisfaction have remained virtually the same over generations.

But the content of complaints has varied substantially, often depending on the mood of the moment: it was different in the self-satisfied 1950s compared with the rambunctious 1960s or the anxious 1990s. As well, there have been changing notions about child development, the nature of teaching and learning, as well as changes in political trends, fiscal priorities, student enrolments, teacher supply, and other issues. As a result, a core curriculum shifts to a system of streaming, with many options and, in time, goes back to destreaming and what is now called a common curriculum. Over time, teaching strategies also change: as the benefits of

individualized attention are better understood, the emphasis shifts from rigid lesson plans to co-operative, small-group learning and other flexible concepts.

In this atmosphere, it is often difficult to distinguish between the latest fads, caprices, and political game-playing, and the reforms that are based on a thoughtful understanding of the most successful means to turn our students into literate citizens predisposed to remaining lifelong learners. It is a trap we hope this report has been able to avoid.

Our examination of historical trends and recent educational policy discussions and initiatives makes clear that some issues keep coming up in different forms in different eras, and are never fully resolved. Issues of the purposes of education and how secondary schooling should be organized are as current today as they were three generations ago. Other issues, however, are new, or at least becoming increasingly important; among them are the broader social needs of students, and recognition that equity issues have to be addressed in a much more substantive way.

They reflect the fact that Ontario's education system exists in a society that has, itself, undergone enormous change, particularly in the last 15 years, and that those changes have an impact on education. In Ontario, poverty, identified as a crucial factor in learning, has increased; immigration from the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East has brought larger populations of visible minorities to urban centres unprepared to deal with change; family structures have shifted dramatically, as has their role. Even a brief review shows how extensive the shifts have been in our society.

Ontario: Picture of the province

Today, as people struggle to comprehend and adapt to our post-modern age, with its focus on information as an economic resource, lifelong learning has become essential. Therefore, Ontario's education system must expand its reach to encompass toddlers as well as older adults. Most important, it must resolve fundamental questions about the roles that, realistically, it can play and the responsibilities it can hope to assume in today's complex, demanding social and economic climate.

All of this must be achieved in a province of astonishing contrasts. It holds more than a third of Canada's population, and its mix of populations mirrors the country's history and

development. The province's ten million people live in Canada's major metropolis and in some of its biggest cities, as well as in thousands of small villages and towns; in its northern reaches, tiny communities are surrounded by hundreds of thousands of hectares of unpopulated wilderness. The result is a province of enormous variety, geographically, climatically, historically, culturally, and socially.

Today's Ontario has little in common with the province that existed even three decades ago. In the past 20 years, immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Africa have outnumbered those from traditional European sources. The manufacturing sector that was once the wellspring of Ontario's prosperity is declining, and service industries are expanding. Not only is everything changing, the pace of change is, itself, increasing. And there, squarely at the centre of change, stands the school system. There are several especially significant shifts that affect our schools. What follows is a short description of some of those factors.

Ontario's changing economy

Unemployment

The facts speak for themselves: between February 1990 and February 1991, approximately 260,000 jobs were lost in Ontario, many in the manufacturing sector. In that time, in the Greater Toronto Area alone, almost 10 percent of the employment base disappeared, more than three times the rate for Canada as a whole.¹⁹ (However, in October 1994, the GTA recorded a growth in job creation for the first time since 1989.) Many smaller centres were particularly hard hit when the one or two companies on which they depended most heavily downsized, closed, or moved away.

“Poverty,” education professor Benjamin Levin points out, “is the enemy of education.”

In 1992, more than 10 percent of Ontario’s adult population was receiving unemployment insurance or social assistance.²⁰ And there has been a disturbing decline in the economic well-being of families headed by people under the age of 35: their median income – the point at which half the population has a higher, and half a lower, income – has dropped 5 percent. For the first time in our collective memory, families no longer anticipate that their children will be better off than they are, and stories of the educated unemployed haunt both parents and children.

Social programs, of which public education is but one, frequently become targets for retrenchment when tax revenues fall and the costs of the social safety net escalate. Often, in these circumstances, the funding of one social program takes place at the expense of another.

Poverty

Of all the economic problems that affect the school system, none has a greater impact than poverty – and there is ample evidence that, in recent years, more and more school-aged Canadian and Ontario children have become impoverished.

In Ontario, the reality of poverty continues to cast dark shadows on many families. In 1992:

- 1,400,000 Ontario residents, 14 percent of the population, lived on low incomes;
- Of that percentage, almost a million were members of the province’s 308,802 low-income families (the rest were single);
- These families accounted for more than 11 percent of all families in Ontario;
- 41 percent of low-income families were headed by sole-support parents, almost all of whom – 92 percent – were women;
- Of children under 18 living with their families, 16.2 percent lived in low-income families;
- More than half the children living in female-led, sole-support households were in low-income families, compared with only 10.2 percent of those living with both parents.²¹

Poverty has an impact on student achievement: according to a report of the Canadian Institute of Child Health, “Poor children are almost three times more likely to drop out of school early than non-poor youth.”²² Statistics for 1991 indicate that 13 percent of poor 16- and 17-year-olds dropped out of school, compared with 5 percent of children who were not poor. “Poverty,” education professor Benjamin Levin points out, “is the enemy of education.”²³

The essence of poverty is that it is a vicious circle: poor children are more likely to be of low birth weight; low birth-weight children are more likely to have physical and developmental problems; children with physical and developmental problems are more likely to have difficulties in school; even when there are no such problems, many poor families are so overwhelmed with the miseries that come from being poor they cannot provide a home environment that supports school learning; children who do poorly in school are more likely to have employment problems.

Another vicious circle: when jobs are scarce, tax revenues decline. If parents are either dependent on social welfare or are working but poor, children become more needy. This puts added pressure on financially squeezed schools to provide physical, social, and emotional support for children who need help – at a time when the taxes that support schools are declining.

Are education and economic prosperity connected?

The link between the economy and the education system is problematic. Anxiety about an uncertain economy often translates into calls for schools to “do more,” on the premise that a strong educational system is vital to the future.

There are two points of view: the first, and currently most dominant, is that education drives the economy – that our economic well-being is dependent on a well-educated workforce able to compete in the “new global economy.”²⁴

Predictions about educational ties to the economic future are uncertain at best; it is difficult, if not impossible, to be sure which jobs will be available and which specific skills will be required.

The other view rests on a different assumption: that economic health is not primarily dependent on the skills and knowledge of the workforce, but economic health does help create educational opportunities.²⁵

Given these different points of departure, different economic futures are offered. According to the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Index, most future jobs will require the kinds of high-level skills and knowledge that were once necessary only for a few, high-end positions. But others see a "pear-shaped" economy in which the mass of jobs are in the low-level part of the service sector ("McJobs"), or in which many people will simply be unemployed.²⁶

What is clear is that the service sector in Ontario has grown: it accounted for 65 percent of workers in 1981 and 72 percent in 1991,²⁷ with much of the increase in part-time work.²⁸

Current Canadian research suggests that the greatest potential for growth is, paradoxically, both in well-paying professional occupations requiring relatively few people with high levels of education and in poorly paying service occupations requiring low levels of education and employing large numbers of people.²⁹

What are the implications for the education system of these figures and forecasts? Some researchers and policy analysts (Henry Levin in the United States, for example)³⁰ suggest that unless a person has considerable education – at least at the university graduate level with some post-graduate work – schooling is not related to increased income. Already, the growing number of people who have degrees has begun to devalue university credentials as a step to employment. Clearly, the educational system does not cause economic crises, and it cannot cure them.

On the basis of research and policy analysis, we have concluded that predictions about educational ties to the economic future are uncertain at best; it is difficult, if not impossible, to be sure which jobs will be available and which specific skills will be required. Although it seems reasonable to suggest that an increasing number of positions will require high-level technical and scientific training, it is entirely possible that the number of such jobs created by these new positions will be small.

Henry Levin's review of American research concludes that overall educational requirements in the year 2000 are likely

to be quite similar to those today.³¹ But his is not the dominant voice being heard in either the U.S. or Canada. Although no-one can demonstrate how it would work in practice, many insist that school reform must be based on the needs of the economy – whatever those turn out to be in a future that seems even harder to predict than usual.

Demographic factors

Before society can decide how to shape its schools, it needs to know who, exactly, will be in them; educational policies, after all, have to be built around people. Because most students are between 5 and 18 years of age (and, therefore, most probably living in families), it is important, as well, to consider the student, not in isolation, but in the family context. A key question for today's policy makers is: In what ways have '90s families changed from those of the 1960s and '70s?

The family

The majority (83 percent) of children in Ontario are being raised in two-parent families, but that number includes blended or recombinant families. The "norm" may now be two working parents, or it could be a single-parent or other kinds of family arrangements that result from the greater number of divorces and remarriages in our society. We are only starting to understand the impact on schools of this shift in family structures and roles.³²

In addition to the fact that families are smaller and more likely to have come from other countries and other cultures, one of the most significant changes in the lives of people, whether Canadian-born or immigrant, is that more children

today live in two-income families. Twenty years ago, only 30 percent of families with children under 19 years had two wage earners. By 1991, the number of dual-earner families had increased to 70 percent.

Just as the school year, with its long summer vacation, was shaped to Canada's agrarian economy, the school day was set up on the basis that a parent, almost always the mother, would be available as a full-time caregiver before and after school and, of course, during school holidays. The need of today's working parents for high-quality care is creating pressures for schools to expand their role, either directly or in partnership with community groups.

Emotional well-being

Many child advocates, mental health professionals, and educators observe that an unprecedented number of children have problems in their home lives, which makes coping at school more difficult.³³

Fertility rates

Because the most accurate predictor of future school needs is the number of babies born each year, the fact that we have gone from a "baby boom" to "baby bust" has had a considerable impact on our education system. The total fertility rate (the number of children a woman would have during her lifetime if she were to follow contemporary fertility patterns) dropped from 3.9 children in 1960 to a low of 1.65 in 1987 (although figures show that there has been a slight increase since, to 1.8 in 1990).

One reason for the decrease is that in the 1990s, Canadian women tend to wait longer to start their families: in 1961,

the average age for a first-time mother was 23.5 years; in 1990 it was 26.4 years.³⁴

Immigration

Immigration is the second important factor affecting school enrolment: in 1991, 55 percent of Canadian immigrants (118,693 people) settled in Ontario. Of these, 72 percent settled in the Greater Toronto Area.³⁵

Immigration patterns have significantly changed the nature of the student population, especially in Toronto, the Ottawa-Carleton region, and generally in urban southern Ontario.

In 1972, nearly half of Ontario's immigrants came from Europe. However, by 1992, nearly 80 percent came from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. By 1991, almost 25 percent of Ontario's population, and almost 40 percent of those living in Metropolitan Toronto, were born outside Canada. (In the rest of the country, 16 percent of the population is foreign-born.)³⁶

Native peoples

There is a very different demographic pattern for aboriginal peoples living in Ontario, which has the greatest number of Native Canadians of any province or territory. In 1991, 12 percent were in the under-4 age group, compared with some 5.6 percent of Ontario's non-Native population. According to the 1991 Census of Canada, the aboriginal population of Ontario was 244,000.

The 128 First Nations and Bands profiled in the report *Akwesasne to Wunnumin Lake* have about 53 percent of the province's total aboriginal population, and 98 percent of the population living on reserves or on Crown land (as defined by the 1989 Indian Register); the majority of these have fewer than 500 residents.³⁷

Visible minorities

Statistics Canada estimates that in 1992, Ontario's population included 1,297,605 members of visible minority groups (13 percent of the provincial population).³⁸ This accounts for more than half of all those people in Canada who are members of visible minorities, and it is both the highest percentage and largest number of any jurisdiction in the country. The population of visible minorities is highest in Toronto, accounting for a quarter of the people in Metropol-

Highlights of the Publicly Funded Education System Ontario – 1992-93

(Approximate Figures)

2 million students
5,000 schools
172 school boards
120,000 teachers
14.5 billion dollars – annual cost

69% of total enrolment in English-language public schools
26% in English-language Roman Catholic schools
4% in French-language Roman Catholic schools*
1% in French-language public schools*

*Includes mixed schools – those that offer both English- and French-language instruction within a single school

itan Toronto and for more than three-quarters of all members of visible minorities in Ontario.³⁹

Roman Catholic and francophone families

There are two other significant demographic groups that have an impact on the way schooling is organized: those Ontarians who identify themselves as Roman Catholics and/or francophones.

Approximately 5 percent of the people in this province identify themselves as francophone, and 5 percent of Ontario students are enrolled in French-language schools. Of these, four out of five are in Roman Catholic French schools; the rest are in public French schools. Some increase in the enrolment in French-language schools may reflect a growth in the number of parents who are exercising their constitutional right to have children educated in French at both elementary and secondary levels. Because the Charter extends the right to French-language education only to Canadian citizens, French-speaking immigrants and refugees who wish to educate their children in the French system must make application to admissions committees established under the Education Act.

Of the approximately 500,000 francophones in Ontario:

- two of three (66 percent) were born in Ontario (the same percentage as anglophones);
- one of four (25 percent) were born in Quebec, and five percent were born in another province (10 percent of anglophones were born in another province);
- 4 percent of francophones were born outside the country (25 percent of Ontario's population was born outside Canada).

Approximately 30 percent of people in Ontario identify themselves as Roman Catholic, a substantial increase in the past 10 or 15 years, due largely to immigration, initially from Mediterranean countries and, more recently, from Latin America and the Philippines; however, Roman Catholic immigration appears to have peaked, with more recent immigrants arriving from countries where other religions are more common.

Values and knowledge

One of the hallmarks of our post-industrial society is a fraying of any consensus about moral values, as well as about the relationship between values and education. In the last Cana-

dian census, for example, the proportion of people who identified themselves as having no religious affiliation was 12.4 percent, a rise of more than five points since 1981.⁴

As a result of our changing demographics and our decreased attachment to traditional social institutions, governments can no longer make assumptions about people's views on issues that, in the past, might have been expected to yield a measure of consensus.

Minority and marginalized groups are no longer willing to sit silently on society's lower rungs. Voices once missing or unheard now are being listened to – women, students, youth, people with disabilities, those with different sexual orientations, as well as minority religious, linguistic, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.

The change in social attitudes and values has its parallel in swiftly evolving technology and communications. At a time when "the information superhighway" has become society's newest cliché, it may be useful to remember that only ten years ago, the microcomputer was a primitive and costly toy for a limited number of hobbyists. The speed of change since then is, itself, a cause of increased unease about the future, particularly on the part of young people and their families. Our society is seen by some as having lost its sense of certainty amid increasing doubts about the possibility of absolute values and universal truths. A great deal of "knowledge" is now treated, from a post-modern perspective, as uncertain, tentative, and changeable, rather than as definite, given, and permanent.⁴¹

Indeed, the very quantity of new information – the frequently referred-to knowledge explosion – is itself bewildering and destabilizing. We were told by the Ontario

Library Association that every issue of the Sunday *New York Times* contains more information than was available to Shakespeare in his lifetime, and although it's not entirely clear who actually did the tallying, scale is the issue. When the amount of new information doubles every 20 minutes, or two years, or whatever, the criteria for being a literate or knowledgeable citizen are not self-evident. Nor, for that matter, is it easy to decide which few bits of this bottomless pit of information our children should have learned by the time they finish high school.

Educational statistics for Ontario

More than two million students (2,015,468), approximately 40 percent of Canada's total school population, were enrolled in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario in 1992-93.⁴²

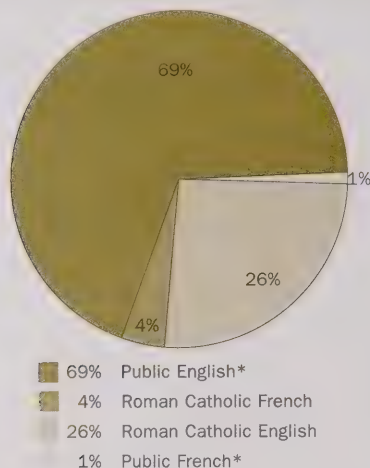
The elementary and secondary system encompasses both public secular and Roman Catholic school boards. As well, there is a parallel French-language education segment (both public and Roman Catholic). As of July 1, 1994, the number of public, separate, and French-language school boards is as follows: English-speaking public, 106; English-speaking Roman Catholic, 58; French-speaking public, 2; French-speaking Roman Catholic, 2.

Ontario's students are accommodated in more than five thousand schools, 3,958 elementary and 796 secondary, as well as in 397 education programs in care or correctional facilities and in nine schools operated by the Ministry of Education and Training. They are taught by 119,706 full-time teachers. The total cost of education is currently

FIGURE 1

Enrolment by Language of Instructional Unit, 1992-93

(Total Elementary & Secondary Enrolment: 2,015,468)



* Includes schools operated by the Ministry of Education and Training

Source: MET, 1994

\$14.542 billion, of which 77 percent is for salaries and benefits.

Of the more than two million students, 65 percent are in elementary school (from junior kindergarten to Grade 8), while 35 percent are enrolled in secondary schools (Grades 9 to 12/OAC). About 8 percent of the province's students are classified as in need of special education.

In 1992-93, there were 98,423 adult students in day schools, of whom 50,104 were between the ages of 19 and 21, while the rest were older. The province's adult education sector is expanding: the number of adult students (aged 19 or more) enrolled in day school has increased dramatically in the last decade. In 1980-81, there were 19,360 such learners; in 1991-92, the number was 85,706. In addition to adults returning to secondary school programs in 1992-93, approximately 105,000 Ontarians were enrolled in the Independent Learning Centre (correspondence) courses, 16,000 in adult literacy programs, and another 19,000 in the Ontario Basic Skills programs.

Continuing education courses are an important dimension of the publicly funded system, serving a student popu-

lation that includes many adults. In 1992–93, for instance, there were approximately one million enrolments in these courses, most of which are given in the evening or during the summer.

As shown in Figure 1, the majority (69 percent) of Ontario students are enrolled in public English-language schools, while 26 percent are in Roman Catholic English schools. As previously noted, the remaining 5 percent are in French-language schools – 4 percent in Roman Catholic schools, and 1 percent in public French schools. Most French-language schools are currently governed by three or more trustees who form a French-language section within the larger boards. In most cases, these trustees are in the minority, but in eight Roman Catholic boards they form the majority. In nine boards with very low numbers of French-language students, French-language advisory committees still advise English-language board members on French-language programs for their students.

Table 1 shows the changes in enrolment in both Catholic and public secondary schools between 1985 and 1992 (the public funding of Roman Catholic schools beyond Grade 10 having begun in 1985).

TABLE 1

Enrolment in Public and Roman Catholic (English and French) Secondary Schools in Ontario, 1985–92

Year	Roman Catholic Secondary Enrolment	Public Secondary Enrolment	Total Number of Students
1985	66,840	535,964	602,804
1986	89,187	527,238	616,425
1987	111,862	520,165	632,027
1988	122,775	518,791	641,566
1989	137,000	511,000	648,000
1990	146,800	513,000	660,000
1991	155,700	524,500	681,200
1992	164,409	537,391	701,800

In the mid- to late-1980s, after a rather long period of declining enrolment, the number of students in Ontario's school system began to increase slowly. Now that the constitutional right of Franco-Ontarians to education in the French language has been recognized, there has been a marginal increase in the number of students in the Franco-Ontarian schools to 97,677 (see Table 2). In its analysis of

demographic trends, the Ministry expects small increases in total enrolment to continue in elementary and secondary education.

TABLE 2

Enrolment in French-language Units, 1980–81 to 1992–93 (selected years)

	1980–81	1990–91	1991–92	1992–93
Elementary	67,298	70,627	69,790	69,283
Secondary	28,959	26,473	27,043	28,394
Total	96,257	97,100	96,833	97,677

In addition to those in the publicly funded system, 3.4 percent⁴³ of Ontario's students were enrolled in independent schools, compared with 4.8 percent of all Canadian students in such schools.⁴⁴

Ontario has 119,706 full-time teachers, including educators not filling classroom teaching positions. Seven percent of these educators are principals or vice-principals; another 7 percent are unit heads; and 7 percent are guidance teachers or school librarians. In addition to the certificated teachers, approximately 50,000 other people support school programs; this includes psychologists, social workers, teaching assistants, bus drivers, secretaries, bookkeepers, and custodial staff.

Table 3 shows the distribution in 1992 of full-time teachers in Ontario.

TABLE 3

Full-time Teachers in Schools, 1992-93

(includes English language and French language)

Number of Teachers	Elementary	Secondary	Total
Public School Boards	50,216	35,476	85,692
Male	13,976	20,943	34,919
Female	36,240	14,533	50,773
R.C. School Boards	23,570	10,444	34,014
Male	5,290	5,583	10,873
Female	18,280	4,861	23,141
Totals	73,786	45,920	119,706

Our teachers are, in the main, middle-aged (hardly surprising in a population that is itself greying); in fact, in 1992-93, about half the full-time teachers in Ontario had more than 16 years' teaching experience. However, that trend may have been modified recently by offers of attractive early-retirement packages; eligibility for such programs is usually based on a combination of age and years of experience.

Working on the assumption that today's teachers make retirement decisions similar to those made by their colleagues in the recent past, the Teachers' Pension Plan Board projects that approximately 16,000 teachers (about 13 percent of the teaching force) will retire over the next five years. This could change, of course, if such factors as retirement eligibility rules were altered.

The majority (74 percent) of elementary teachers (Grades JK to 8) are female. Current projections, based on the high

percentage of women now entering the elementary teaching (especially for kindergarten to Grade 6 levels)⁴⁵ suggest that the existing ratio of women to men is unlikely to change substantially in the next decade. In spite of efforts to encourage more men to enter elementary school teaching, their presence is declining. In secondary schools, women now make up 42 percent of the teaching force, compared with only 30 percent a decade ago.

National data on teachers aged 30 and younger and on current enrolment in faculties of education⁴⁶ show a continuing increase in the proportion of women in both elementary and secondary programs. There is still a vast gap between the presence of women in teaching and in education's managerial ranks: the majority (68.9 percent) of principals and vice-principals are male. Hoping to change that situation, the Ministry in 1989 set a management positions target of 50 percent female by the year 2000.⁴⁷

Although gender-related data are available, there is no consistent information of the proportion of teachers from minority ethnic, racial, or disabled groups. While such information is gathered by several individual school boards, it does not yet exist province-wide. Based on reported data, however, it is almost certain that disabled and minority persons are not represented among teachers and administrators according to their proportion in our larger society.

Some indicators of how we are doing

There are a number of ways in which to measure and describe school systems. These include the percentage of students who graduate; student performance on provincial, national, and international tests; participation rates (i.e., mean years of schooling) as compared with that in other countries; parent, student, and community "satisfaction"; the education level of teachers; comparative curricula; physical resources; educational and financial equity; and other factors.

Opinion surveys

While parents have some reservations about the governance of schools and about this country's ability to compete globally, they are generally satisfied with the education their children are receiving. According to surveys carried out by the polling company Environics in 1993, parent satisfaction in Ontario and in the rest of Canada increased from approxi-

mately 7 out of 10 (in 1990) to approximately 8 out of 10 (in 1993).⁴⁸

However, when the *Ninth OISE Survey 1992*⁴⁹ asked parents what they thought about the overall quality of education in the past 10 years, 30 percent (an increase of 1 percent over 1990) said it had improved at the elementary level but, significantly, 42 percent thought it had deteriorated.

People tend to have slightly more favourable perceptions about elementary school education than about secondary education. Parents and the general public appeared to be satisfied with methods of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. In 1993, Environics found slightly more than four in ten Ontarians were "somewhat satisfied" and almost three in ten were "very satisfied" with the way students were being taught those basic skills.

Statistical analyses

According to the Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD) report, *Education in OECD Countries*,⁵⁰ in 1989–90, Canada had the highest percentage of 16-year-olds still in school (the mean level of education for Canadians is 12.3 years). Furthermore, Canada has a greater percentage of its population in higher education than any country other than the United States.

The OECD reported that more women than men were enrolled in universities in Canada in 1989–90, a figure supported by *Education in Canada*, published by Statistics Canada, which reported that 53 percent of undergraduates enrolled in Canadian universities in 1991–92 were women.⁵¹

Keith Newton⁵² reported in 1992 that Canadian students are more likely to go on to post-secondary studies (45 to 50 percent) than young people in most other countries. Just over 13 percent of Ontarians hold university degrees, a higher percentage than in any other jurisdiction in Canada.⁵³

In 1990–91, 77 percent of Ontario's 18-year-olds graduated from secondary school. However, these figures may still overestimate the drop-out rate, since they do not take into account difficulties in tracking students who transfer from board to board (and province to province), enrol at different times of the year, or re-enrol after a period of absence.⁵⁴

Equity concerns

Jerry Paquette of the University of Western Ontario argues that Canada fails in educational fairness because children of low socio-economic status are less likely than others to succeed in courses and programs that may lead to employment in today's difficult labour market.⁵⁵

There is no meaningful assessment of whether educational policies deal fairly with children of different racial and ethno-cultural backgrounds; only a few school boards systematically gather data on program participation by various groups; students' results are infrequently categorized by race or ethno-cultural origins. We have Toronto data, however, to indicate that some ethnic groups are not thriving in the system. It's too early to judge if certain policies – including employment equity and destreaming – are correcting inequities.

Testing and assessment

An Environics 1993 survey found that 7 out of 10 Canadians want nation-wide testing, although roughly half of all those questioned feel that such tests are unfair to children from non-Canadian backgrounds.

According to *The Ninth OISE Survey*, 59 percent of people in Ontario in 1990 and 73 percent in 1992 believe that province-wide tests should be used to assess individual performance; the percentages were higher in relation to secondary school students.

Among Canadian jurisdictions, Ontario was noted, until recently, for placing less emphasis on province-wide assessments of student learning. While other provinces, particular-

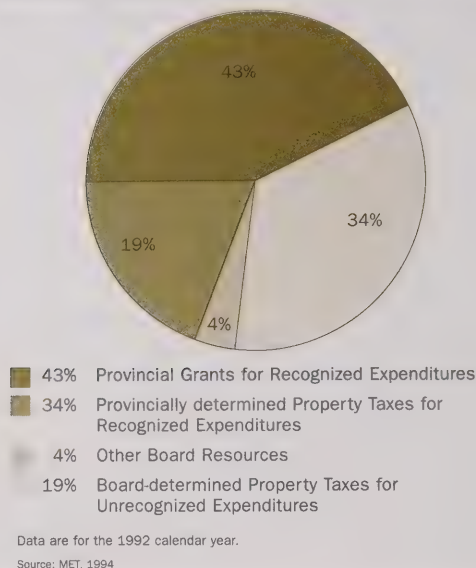
ly in the Canadian west, used Grade 12 subject examinations and other standardized assessments, Ontario relied almost completely on individual teacher assessments.

Under a policy instituted by the Ministry and begun in the 1993–94 school year, every student is now tested in Grade 9 for reading and writing; results in the reviews and the tests are reported in terms of percentages of students reaching certain levels, defined as “inadequate,” “satisfactory,” or “superior.”

There seems to be no clear understanding yet, particularly by the media or the public, of the way these standards should be interpreted and judged. For instance, when the results of the Grade 9 reading and writing tests were announced on June 30, 1994, readers of the *Globe and Mail* discovered that “Ontario students fail to shine,” while those of the *Toronto Star* learned that “Students make the grade.”

In the absence of systematic and long-term provincial data, many people look to national and international achievement tests as a key indicator of how well the school system works. Most such tests focus on mathematics and science, primarily because these are easier than other subjects to assess across different cultures and languages. While it may disappoint those searching for clear-cut performance indicators, even these data are not as easily interpreted as many believe. For instance, in its 1992 report, *A Lot to Learn: Education and Training in Canada*⁵⁶ the now-defunct Economic Council of Canada claimed that international test results showed Canada’s educational system in serious trouble. Many educational researchers disagree with this interpretation. Philip Nagy, of the Department of Measurement and Evaluation of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Educa-

FIGURE 2
Financing of Education: Revenues
(Total Cost of Education = \$14.542 billion)



tion,⁵⁷ disputes many of the Council’s claims, and gives several reasons why what he calls “horse-race” comparisons should be treated cautiously.

Costs of education

While the Royal Commission’s primary mandate did not include financial issues, they cannot be ignored, particularly as they relate to accountability, excellence, and equity.

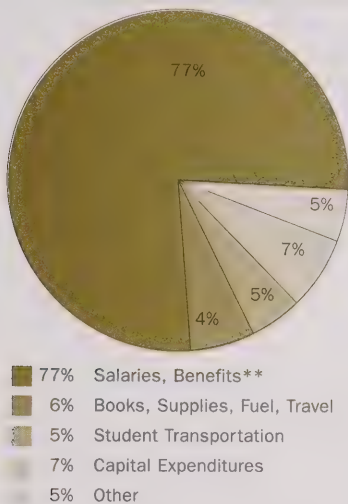
Any discussion of educational costs is controversial. For example, a strong area of contention between many critics and defenders of the system is Ontario’s ranking in comparisons of educational costs. As is often the case, the answer depends on how the figures are calculated.

According to the Ministry, total education expenditures for elementary and secondary education totalled \$14.542 billion in the 1992 calendar year. As shown in Figure 2, a little more than 50 percent of that was raised through municipal property taxes, while 43 percent was provincially funded. The small remaining amount came from such other sources as fees and federal payments.

FIGURE 3

Total Education Expenditures, 1992*

(Total Education Expenditures = \$14.542 billion)



* Data Are for the 1992 calendar year.

** This category includes contributions to the Teachers' Pension Fund.

Source: IMET, 1994

Education expenditures

Salaries and benefits are the largest educational expenditure in Ontario (as they are in other jurisdictions), with salaries accounting for 77 percent of the total elementary and secondary budget. The other 23 percent is divided among capital expenditures (7 percent), supplies (6 percent), and student transportation (5 percent). The remaining 5 percent includes contributions to the Teachers' Pension Fund. Figure 3 shows this distribution of costs.

Cost comparisons

Although critics often suggest that Canada's educational system is too costly, comparisons with other industrialized countries show that it is neither the most nor the least expensive. While exact parallels are difficult because of the variety of calculations used, Canada spent, in total, 6.2 percent of its GDP on education in 1989,⁵⁸ which is less than Denmark (7 percent), Norway (7.4 percent), and Sweden (7.1 percent); the same as the Netherlands (6.2 percent); and more than the United Kingdom (4.7 percent), the United

States (5.4 percent), Japan (4.7 percent, according to 1988 figures), and France (5.3 percent).

In 1989-90, among the ten provinces, Ontario had the highest level of per-pupil expenditures in Canada.⁵⁹ Table 4 shows the impact of our relative wealth in calculating various measures of educational costs: although Ontario spent more per capita than other provinces, education costs represented a lower proportion of GDP and of personal income than in most other provinces.

TABLE 4

Total expenditures on education, by province, in relation to gross domestic product (GDP) and personal income (PI) and as dollars per capita, 1990⁶⁰

Province	Expenditures on education \$'000	GDP	PI	Dollars per capita
Newfoundland	\$ 1,038,327	11.8%	11.0%	\$1,813
Prince Edward Island	\$ 193,792	9.8%	9.0%	\$1,483
Nova Scotia	\$ 1,474,766	8.7%	9.0%	\$1,648
New Brunswick	\$ 1,206,467	9.2%	9.7%	\$1,670
Quebec	\$11,967,672	7.8%	8.5%	\$1,768
Ontario	\$18,480,496	6.8%	7.7%	\$1,896
Manitoba	\$ 1,961,427	8.3%	9.2%	\$1,801
Saskatchewan	\$ 1,726,390	8.6%	9.6%	\$1,768
Alberta	\$ 4,589,466	6.4%	8.3%	\$1,856
British Columbia	\$ 5,253,321	6.5%	7.3%	\$1,677

Surveys of public attitudes, carried out in 1992, showed that 28 percent of Ontarians favour increasing education expenditures at all levels, while 41 percent believe that, at the very least, funding should keep up with inflation.⁶¹ Asked

specifically about elementary and secondary education, 55 percent wanted to see more money spent, while 35 percent felt that expenditures should keep up with inflation. In the 1993 Environics survey, slightly more than half of all Canadians felt that not enough was being spent on education, while three in ten felt that the spending level was “just enough.”

Salaries

Over the last 30 years, teacher salaries have improved greatly. While traditionally very meagre, they increased rapidly in Ontario in the 1970s and '80s, and slowly thereafter. By 1990–91, teachers' salaries in Ontario averaged \$51,735, about 10 percent above the Canadian teacher average of \$46,810.⁶² Ontario's 1993 social contract legislation froze teachers' salaries (along with those of other public service employees) and reduced funding; some school boards closed on days for which employees were not paid.

Pupil-educator ratio

Another significant factor in calculating education costs is the ratio of pupils to teachers. While many would argue that having more teachers teaching fewer students is highly desirable, it is also more expensive. Because of uncertainty about the definition of a “teacher,” Statistics Canada, rather than basing the figure on class size, now uses the term “pupil-educator ratio” (PER): the ratio of full-time pupils to all certified educators. (To be included, the “educator” must have a teaching certificate. Thus any board-level employee with a teaching certificate, including superintendents and consultants, would be included in PER.)

Today, there are slightly fewer pupils per educator in Ontario than the average for Canada as a whole. The ratio dropped from 18.3:1 in the 1980s to today's 15.3:1, compared with the Canadian average of 15.7 pupils per educator.⁶³ Most of the recent PER changes resulted from the provincial government's decision to lower Grades 1 and 2 class sizes to a maximum of 20 pupils. Other factors include expansion of special education programs and an increase in the number of administrators and consultants serving school boards. Recent social contract and funding cutbacks are changing this picture somewhat. Not only is the number of administrators and consultants being reduced, but the phasing in of class-size reductions in Grades 1 and 2 has also been slowed.

Language programs

ESL/ESD: English-language schools

The cost of programs that teach English as a second language or English skill development (ESL/ESD) affects educational expenditures; this is especially true in Ontario, because of the high percentage of newcomers who settle here, particularly in urban areas. The Carleton Board of Education reports that 46 percent of immigrants intending to settle in the Ottawa-Carleton region have no facility in either of Canada's official languages.⁶⁴ In 1991, public and Roman Catholic boards in Metro Toronto spent just over \$70 million on ESL/ESD classes.

ALF/PDF: French-language schools

Programs equivalent to ESL/ESD – Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF) and Perfectionnement du français (PDF) – are for those who have no competence in French but are entitled, under the Charter of Rights, to French-language education, or are admitted by admissions committees. These programs are being offered for the first time in the 1994–95 school year.

A national and international context for educational reform

Major educational reform is in the air, not just in Ontario but across the country and around the world. Clearly, the many powerful factors that have coalesced to put educational change so high on Ontario's political agenda – economic and technological change, employment uncertainty, chang-

ing family structures – have had the same impact in every part of the developed world.

In the past few years, virtually all provinces have conducted major reviews of elementary and secondary schooling, and such countries as Britain and New Zealand, as well as many American states, have instituted changes, some of them quite radical, in the operations and governance of their educational systems.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the issues that have gained such currency and created such divisiveness in Ontario have remarkably similar parallels elsewhere. In many places, notably Alberta, the United States, and England, there is increasing tension between the forces of centralization at the national level and of decentralization favouring the individual school.⁶⁵

The trend towards decentralized governance in Edmonton has favoured “school-based” or “school-site management” administration, which means less control at the board or government level and more at the school level. Even there, however, situations vary: in Edmonton, which was a pioneer in school-based management, principals make decisions that elsewhere in Canada are usually made by school boards. However, control of such broad policy matters as budgets, province-wide testing, and curriculum remain in the hands of the provincial government, while hiring, special services, and budget allocations are the responsibility of a reduced number of boards of education. Alberta Premier Klein’s 1994 restructuring initiatives centralized Ministry control, while creating the option of parent councils.

In Dade County, Florida, the principal and teachers wield power previously available only to senior board administrators. In Chicago, England, New Zealand, and a few Australian states, parent or school councils – some elected, some appointed – make decisions at the school level. At the moment, parents in New Zealand, where there are no boards of education or local education authorities, appear to exercise the strongest and most direct control. However, it is important to note that these reforms have been relatively recent, most having been put in place within the last ten years, and the long-term effects on a range of educational indicators has yet to be assessed. But it would be fair to say that, so far, all of these initiatives have received distinctly mixed reviews.

The major provincial initiatives for elementary and secondary education in 1994 appear to be governance, accountability, student achievement and assessment measures, professional development, technology, student services, restructuring, curriculum, fiscal restraint, leadership and partnership, vocational and technical education, educational equity, violence prevention, destreaming, parental involvement, efficiency, Indian and Métis education, and charter schools. This, by any criteria, is a remarkable list.

In Canada in recent years, education policy-making has been most concerned with excellence and equity. On the other hand, shrinking education budgets and recessionary times have engendered a demand for accountability in delivering educational services. Because of these issues, combined with the anxiety of Canadians to stay competitive in today’s globalized information-age economy, a number of provinces have commissioned studies on shaping education to deal with an uncertain future.

Both the New Brunswick Royal Commission on Education (1993) and the one in Newfoundland (1990)⁶⁶ questioned the wisdom of an “undiscriminating pursuit of training” when future employment opportunities are largely unknown.

Across the country, demands for standardization are apparently meant to ensure more readily measurable accountability. A number of provinces are developing indicator systems, while the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) is increasingly active in this area. The CMEC, for instance, has developed a national School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), to assess how well 13- and 16-year-old students across Canada perform in mathematics, languages, and science.

The CMEC also plans to form study groups to examine the possibility of harmonizing curricula across Canada, while the various regions have begun curricula comparisons. The ministerial group has also initiated a project to describe and research policy issues related to distance education and open learning in Canada.

As reported by the CMEC,⁶⁷ the major provincial initiatives for elementary and secondary education in 1994

A brief look at the historical context suggests that, to a large extent, our system evolved from one in which religious groups and individual parents took the initiative and provided the funds to educate their children, to the current situation in which almost complete public support goes hand in hand with a high degree of public control. There has also been a gradual shift from limited access to education to compulsory education for all 6- to 16-year-olds, and a broadening of the curriculum to meet the needs of this wider range of students.

Some recent reports and inquiries on the education system such as the Hall-Dennis report, the Radwanski report, and the reports of the Select Committee on Education have addressed issues remarkably similar to those we are addressing. Recent legislation regarding students with special needs, extension of funding to Roman Catholic schools, and French-language governance have had significant impact on the education system. These areas will be addressed in more depth in later chapters.

The enormous geographic, climatic, cultural, and social diversity of our province places heavy demands on the education system. Other factors such as the current difficult economic climate, rapidly changing demographics, the lack of consensus about moral values, and the relationship between values, knowledge and education all increase the burden on schools.

A quick look at statistics indicates the magnitude of our system. More than two million students, approximately 40 percent of Canada's total school population, were enrolled in Ontario's elementary and secondary schools in 1992-93. Figures on education expenditures in 1990 also suggest that Ontario spent more per pupil on education than other provinces.

A brief scan of the national and international scene also indicates that Ontario is not alone in examining its education system, and that issues such as governance, accountability, student achievement and assessment, curriculum, and the cost of education are of as much concern in these other jurisdictions as they are in Ontario.

appear to be governance, accountability, student achievement and assessment measures, professional development, technology, student services, restructuring, curriculum, fiscal restraint, leadership and partnership, vocational and technical education, educational equity, violence prevention, destreaming, parental involvement, efficiency, Indian and Métis education, and charter schools. This, by any criteria, is a remarkable list, reflecting the intense focus on education across Canada. Indeed, it is hard to see which areas are not being scrutinized. The most commonly cited initiatives are governance, accountability, student achievement and assessment, curriculum, and technical education. Violence-prevention measures were mentioned only by Ontario.

Despite all the studies, all the changes, all the reports, at least some of the items on each of those lists would be familiar to Bishop Strachan and Egerton Ryerson. But the longevity of Ontario's education concerns is not the issue: our ability to cope with the purposes and delivery of education, in terms appropriate to our own time, is what matters.

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People's Voices

THE OTTAWA
Citizen

November 17, 1993

Editorials

Page A10

...Despite the cacophony of divergent interests, the public hearings are a useful tool to help the commissioners with their colossal challenge. The hearings put a human face on problems, provide a forum to float creative ideas, and give the commissioners a peek at the sort of complexities that elude academic study.

For citizens the hearings are a chance to sound off, while becoming part of the solution....

But, ultimately, resolving the intractable problems of modern schooling will demand of them still more; blessed with the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon, they may also require divine intervention....

During the public hearings, many differing and distinct voices emerged, but we found that our various types of public consultation had one thing in common: each brought a truly astonishing range of opinions on educational issues. On almost any topic, we heard arguments full of conviction and logic. On very few issues, however, was there agreement even within a given group: there is neither a single, easily stated teachers' position on educational issues nor a consistent profile of parents' concerns and priorities.

What follows is not meant to be a complete record of every remark or suggestion made to the Commission, but rather a reflection of people's voices as they spoke with us during the hearings. The reader will find throughout the Report consistent references to the voices we heard.

The purposes of education and curriculum issues

The purpose and content of schooling, perhaps more than any other issue, demonstrates the breadth and passion of public opinion regarding education in Ontario. We were told repeatedly that our job was to clarify the purpose of education so that schools, teachers, and principals would have a clear mandate, and parents would know the system's expectations of them and their children.

One frequently heard opinion was that, at the moment, schools are taking on too much, or are being expected to take on too much.

There was a sense that in attempting to do everything, schools are not able to do anything excellently. This accounts for the common parental complaint that educational basics

are being neglected. We frequently heard the call for schools to focus more on teaching reading, writing, and numeracy.

Many presenters saw a vital link between the quality of the education system and the health of the economy.

Many individuals and groups drew a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the family and those of the school. Others, however, particularly in the francophone and Roman Catholic communities, saw the school as acting *in loco parentis* and expect the values and traditions of the home to be supported by the school.

The second general view we heard concerning the purposes of education stressed the role of schools in moving society toward greater equity, and the need for the educational system to structure itself in ways that permit students from all backgrounds and with all levels of ability to have equivalent opportunities to succeed.

Many teachers, representatives of social agencies, and young people themselves told us that schools must do more to meet the social, physical, and emotional needs of students. Teenagers who had left school, developmentally handicapped students and their families, members of minority groups, and anti-violence advocates indicated that, at present, schools are not structured to respond to their concerns. They raised profound questions about the role of the school in responding to, and in some cases attempting to correct, problems in society at large.

Individuals and groups that underscored the role of the school in promoting social justice and equity were frequently critical of the perceived influence of the business community in shaping the agenda of public education.

VOICES

We have lost the ability to focus on the definition of education and what we expect from it. For before any changes can be truly made we must ask ourselves what do we want this new improved system to accomplish ... I ask you to open your eyes ... and find the purpose which we have lost.

Raffi Mazmanian, student

Implore you to do less – but do it better! Our children most urgently need the basics – the necessary skill levels of reading, writing, and math – for this age of information.

Mary de Bassecourt, parent

Quality education is fundamental to the performance and prosperity of Canadians. Canada is engaged in global competition. To maintain or improve our position requires surpassing the best performance, in select areas, of other countries, in the utilization of people and resources. Individual satisfaction, in a competitive and changing environment, requires all people to be equipped with sound first-principle knowledge of most scientific fields, allied with mathematics and art/humanities. This provides the individual with an informed basis for judgment.

Professional Engineers of Ontario, Niagara Chapter

The school's role is not to be a parent but to be an institution that challenges each child and provides the basic knowledge on which they may build their future education and careers ... This basic knowledge would have to include reading, writing, mathematics, and science skills.

John Wanless Public School, parents' group

Ontario's public school system ... must first increase its ability to meet the psycho-social needs of the substantial minority of at-risk children who arrive at school lacking the basic cognitive, emotional, and social skills necessary for school success. Many of these children will not succeed, academically or behaviorally, without an adequate response by the education system to their psycho-social needs.

Paul Steinhauer, on behalf of the Sparrow Lake Alliance

Many presenters gave compelling reasons why certain subjects should be maintained or expanded within the curriculum; many stressed the value of liberal arts education in developing a well-rounded and informed individual. Groups from the Catholic school community identified an additional purpose of schooling for separate schools: instilling Catholic values throughout the curriculum.

Other religious groups asked for the same opportunity. Roman Catholics enjoy to have publicly funded education imbued with their religious values.

Francophone presenters identified their vision of francophone education as a vital linguistic and cultural support for their community. Thus, francophone students spoke of the need for “animation culturelle” in their classes, in their school activities, and as a link to the community.

The degree of Ministry receptivity to their needs, as well as adequate representation and active participation within the Ministry, were issues in both the Catholic and French systems.

Teaching and teacher education

While there was broad agreement that teachers are the key to both excellence and effective reform in education, there was considerable difference of opinion about how to ensure quality teaching.

Many parents favour teacher-directed procedures or more use of systematic phonics in teaching beginning reading.

Many briefs said there is a need to expand ethno-cultural and racial diversity within the teaching profession, specifically by broadening admissions to faculties of education, and to support teachers in better ways to work in today's diverse environment.

Students value teachers who are warm, caring, empathetic, genuinely involved, and powerful motivators. Some teachers are criticized as being burned-out, uncaring, and/or incompetent.

Students suggest some reasons – and perhaps some solutions – to the drop-out problem. Boredom is number one: while they say they don't expect to be entertained, students believe a teacher's ability to relate to them is a key to learning.

There were three major criticisms of the existing pre-service teacher-preparation programs: first, there was a pervasive sense that the current programs are not long

enough to cover the necessary range of topics and to ensure the development of the practical skills that starting teachers require; second, the content of several existing programs was judged to lack relevance; and third, the classroom time that student teachers spend in schools was criticized as too short.

The francophone and Catholic communities had concerns about ensuring an adequate supply of appropriately qualified teachers for their schools. Catholic presenters frequently commented on the inadequate response from faculties of education to their requests for programs that would meet their system and curriculum needs.

Linked to academic achievement and adequate support for teaching and learning was the issue of additional training for French-language teachers. (Many have moved from areas, principally from Quebec, where French is the majority language, to Ontario, where, in the main, it is a minority language.)

There was considerable confusion about what could and should be expected of teachers in terms of meeting academic, social, and emotional needs. Teachers themselves reported feeling overwhelmed by conflicting expectations, and expressed concern about a lack of professional support.

Assessment and accountability

There was near consensus from those outside the system that more assessment of student learning, and more testing, are needed, and that greater attention should be paid to ensuring accountability.

We understood accountability to include fiscal responsibility on the part of trustees, and an assurance of program effectiveness from administrators. On the other hand, many

Ethno-cultural pluralism requires that changes be made to curricula and learning material. The aim will be to eliminate all racist or discriminatory images or representations. We will also have to implement education practices that reflect closely the francophone and the multicultural population of Ontario. Only in this framework will the French-language schools be able to help young people from ethno-cultural communities develop a positive self-image as well as a feeling of belonging to their school and to the francophone community of Ontario. [Translation]

Association interculturelle franco-ontarienne

Racism is a social institution that permeates all others. Anti-racism educates to recognize and act upon racism. The principles of anti-racism form a solid ground for all forms of anti-discriminatory social action. The educational system forms a significant part of the social bases that can maintain or dismantle social institutions. This is why anti-racist education is crucial education.

Anti-Racist Multicultural Educators' Network of Ontario

We see that often it is the needs of business that dictate what students learn. We believe that in the process of teaching students to be globally competitive, educators sometimes overlook important aspects of education.

Raging Independent Student Educational Group (RISE)

We believe that Catholic schools in Ontario provide a distinctive education through the integration of Catholic beliefs and corresponding social values in all learning experiences.

London and Middlesex Regional Council Catholic Parent-Teacher Association

Education plays a vital role in the evolution of a community. On the one hand, it can help a community in achieving its collective ideal, and on the other hand, it can just as well contribute to making the community disappear. The francophone community is asking that it be given tools to ensure that education contributes to its growth and its evolution. [Translation]

Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton (Section publique)

Teachers should be more excited about their work! Otherwise, how do they expect to excite students?

Ontario Secondary School Students' Association

educators seemed to be concerned that inappropriate assessment would be imposed on schools, and that this would interfere with learning.

Some students believe that standardized testing would curb inflation of marks, and some applying for university worry about how standards and marks compare across schools. At the same time, there are parents who are unsure how well their children are doing, and believe that standardized tests would give them better information.

Universities want some form of standardized assessment to deal with grade inflation and differing standards across schools.

Many submissions stressed the need to avoid gender, culture, race, and language biases in testing and assessment, whatever methodologies are developed and used. At the same time, some ethnic and racial minority groups expressed concern about the achievement levels of their children, and did support the need for better assessment.

Organization of education (governance)

The two main concerns expressed about the way education governance is organized centred on participation and effectiveness.

Parents, high school students, and a variety of advocacy groups wanted some role in making decisions about various aspects of schooling, including the focus of curriculum. When we discussed this issue further with certain people, however, it became clear that the essential problem was that they are frustrated with a system that does not recognize their concerns and that does not make them feel valued and welcome.

Many submissions raised questions and concerns about possible duplication of services, the existence of too many levels of bureaucracy, and ineffective use of resources. Such briefs came from education reform groups, business, and some parents, as well as from educators. Many called for reductions in the number of school boards and trustees.

Representatives from the Catholic and francophone communities asked for equal per-pupil funding, to give better support to school programs.

These groups were also concerned about any potential threat to the distinctive nature of their schools. To ensure that this would not happen, many francophones asked that the recommendations of an earlier document, the Report of

the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group, (the “Cousineau report”) be implemented.

Aboriginal groups were concerned about assuming self-governance of schooling on reserves, and having more voice in the education of their students in schools under the jurisdiction of school boards. They asked for learning materials that are more culturally appropriate, better ways of taking advantage of distance education in their remote communities, and anti-racist education to promote a more accurate understanding of their people throughout the publicly funded system.

A number of briefs indicated that communications between the Ministry and school boards are poor on several initiatives, and that some clarification of roles and responsibilities is needed.

Public concerns and the Commission’s mandate

Underlying the concerns of all those who made submissions to the Commission is a distinct sense of unease and uncertainty about the educational system. People spoke about unclear purposes and overload; they questioned whether the material students were learning was necessary and important, whether they were learning it at an appropriate level, whether the system was equitable, and whether it was cost effective. Many people made suggestions on these and other issues.

Although we listened to critics and supporters, inside and outside the system, and were moved by their concern and passion, what they suggested did not add up to a coherent plan for reform. Assuming otherwise would only lead to more fragmented solutions to isolated problems, or give the

We have specific concerns about the supply of teachers prepared for, available to, and committed to the philosophy of Catholic school education ... While we support the contemporary programs of the faculties, we are amazed and frustrated by the void of programs designed specifically for those preparing to teach in Catholic schools.

Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association

With each passing generation, the roles of teachers have become wider and more diverse. All school teachers must, therefore, be redeveloped in the exercise of new professional and social responsibilities, be directly involved in the development of educational policies, and act as advisors to those who administer them.

Canadian Alliance of Black Educators, Ontario

Parents emphatically want to reinstate standardized testing of students at all grades, mainly because of the confusion regarding how students are actually doing. Even with boards who favour evaluation of students, teachers and board officials are reluctant to publish results in a way that allows for school-by-school, class-by-class comparison.

Mackenzie Parental Advisory Committee, North York

We believe effort and money should be directed to the school and not to bureaucratic organization. The current school board system should be replaced by a system of school-based management, in which a school principal is primarily responsible to an elected council, of which parents form a majority.

The Organization for Quality Education

The other major concern for Catholic school communities is fair and equitable access to funding. As models of efficiency, many separate school boards have accomplished much, with considerably less than their equal share of the tax dollar, but this sacrifice, often at the expense of arts, athletics, or special service programs, must not be permitted to continue.

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

It is important that the elementary and secondary school curriculum include materials, which are free of racism, and which promote first nations history in a positive and realistic light. It is equally important that Native studies be offered throughout the school systems, at the elementary and secondary school levels.

Doug Maracle, Grand Chief, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

illusion that some perfect, imagined past can be replicated in an educational system at the end of the 20th century.

Instead, the need is to define learning systems for the future. Everything has changed: students, teachers, families, technology – society itself. How could the basic design of schools stay the same? Who would be satisfied if they did?

In the other volumes of this report we set out the conclusions we reached about the way Ontario's education system should be shaped; we suggest, in broad terms, how that might be achieved; and how our recommendations could be implemented.

The next chapter of this report articulates the purposes of the school system, and how they relate to the mandates and practices of other social institutions. In Chapters 5 and 6 we consider what is known about how children and adolescents learn, and about good and effective teaching.

During the public hearings, an astonishing range of opinions on educational issues emerged. There was very little agreement on any issues, even within a particular group.

There was an underlying sense of unease and uncertainty about the education system. People spoke about unclear purposes and overload; they questioned whether the material students were learning was necessary and important, whether they were learning it well enough, whether the system was equitable and whether it was cost effective. Many groups were concerned about having an adequate voice and having their concerns considered

when decisions are made at all levels of the system.

Although many people made suggestions on these and other issues, our job was to develop a full and coherent plan for reform that would lead to an effective education system for the future.

In the rest of this report we set out the conclusions we reached about the purposes of the school system, how they relate to the mandates and practices of other social institutions, and we suggest in broad terms how Ontario's education system should be shaped, how that might be achieved, and how our recommendations could be implemented.

Purposes of Education

In this chapter, we address the confusion around the appropriate purposes for Ontario schools, and attempt to clarify the focus for educators, parents, students, and community. We propose a set of purposes to guide Ontario schools, and develop a framework that places schools in the broader social context. We do not pretend that this set of purposes will satisfy everyone, but our framework responds to the issues raised in the public hearings and submissions as well as in professional and research literature.

The framework and suggested purposes are the foundation of our approach to learning, teaching, and curriculum, the basis for considering accountability and assessment, and the source of our suggestions around organizing education. Our position acknowledges and supports some diversity in what people want from our publicly funded schools. It gives some guidance, not only about what schools can be expected to do, but also, about the more contentious issue of what schools, or at least teachers, should not be expected to do. This seems necessary if we are to deal with the problems of focus and overload.

The issues

What should schools be for? As we noted in the previous chapter, the issue of purpose seemed to underlie many of the concerns raised in the public hearings and the submissions. A general feeling of unease accompanies much of the current discussion about education, a belief that schools may have lost the clear sense of purpose and direction that seemed to be characteristic of earlier eras. Expectations for schools are ever expanding, often contradictory, and frequently overwhelming.

In Chapter 2 we reviewed some of the societal changes that have led to the diffuse and often conflicting demands on schools. Concern about Canada's role in the global economy, a decline of confidence in all social institutions, increased pressures for high quality education for all students (especially those who have been disadvantaged in the past), changes in family structure and in the extent to which families can effectively support their children's development; all

these factors have increased (and diversified) the pressures on schools.

Unless we address these profound demographic and social changes, many children may not achieve their potential, or what they learn may be irrelevant to their lives. In other words, if schooling is to make a difference in the lives of children, schools have a responsibility to review, critically, what they do in the light of changed social contexts.

North America has obviously moved far from the "common school" of the late 19th century and the earlier part of this century. In Ontario, the fact that schools are differentiated on the basis of language and religion is basic to any understanding of education in the province. While there are more similarities than differences, the "minority status," and consequently the protected constitutional rights, of Roman Catholics and francophones in Ontario must be taken into account. We also have considerable variation in teaching strategies or organization of student learning across schools within each of the four components of the publicly funded system: public and separate, English and French.

We have, as well, a wide variety of voices demanding to be heard and responded to. As long as the economy was booming and the educational system was growing, the system seemed to respond to the demands of advocacy groups and of others by simply adding programs and policies. Now that resources are scarce, and education must compete with health and social welfare sectors for limited funding, programs and positions are often cut, but with little sense of unified purpose. The end result is a system increasingly characterized by distinct, and often competing, agendas.

When schools are pushed to meet so many agendas, there is a danger they will be diverted from their focus on teaching and learning. However, while there may be agreement that purposes are too vague, and that schools are increasingly expected to take on more and more, yet apparently with less and less in the way of resources, there is little agreement on how the situation should be clarified.

The best case for public education has always been that it is a common good: that everyone, ultimately, has a stake in education. Therefore, we start with the idea that publicly funded schools “exist to serve all children, not simply those with the loudest or most recent advocates.”¹ At the same time, we articulate what people expect from their schools, and identify what schools do that makes them different from other institutions and agencies.

Although people often refer somewhat nostalgically to an earlier era in which educational issues were less contentious, Prof. Rebecca Coulter, in her paper written for the Royal Commission on Learning, points out that disagreements about purposes are not new:

The arguments about the purposes of schooling, for character formation, for social reform, for patriotism/nationalism and democratic citizenship, for economic prosperity, for vocational training or job training, persist in rather similar forms across the 19th and 20th centuries, as do the related critiques of those purposes.²

In the past, powerful groups and individuals found it easy to impose their views on the system, disregarding dissenting voices. The challenge now is to find common ground, and find ways of accommodating differences.

Sharpening the focus: A set of purposes

Given all the confusion and uncertainty about purposes, and given the need to be aware of both explicit and implicit purposes and functions of schools, what do we suggest to guide Ontario schools?

We believe it is important that there be a basic set of purposes for Ontario’s schools, primarily to help schools and school boards make difficult choices. Given the current state of uncertainty about directions, the Commission proposes such a basic set, which we believe should guide decisions about priorities and about how various needs should be addressed. Agreement on key purposes will thus help in choosing among alternatives, and deciding which programs are most important. The list is as follows, with the first purpose, that of promoting intellectual growth, being the most central:

Intellectual development

- Ensure high-level literacies, beginning with basic reading and writing skills, leading to increasing knowledge, intellectual understanding, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking in a wide range of subjects;

Learning to learn

- Foster a love of learning as the foundation for continuous lifelong learning, by nurturing the natural curiosity of students;

Citizenship

- Prepare young people to participate in and contribute to life in a modern, diverse, and democratic society, and to respond knowledgeably, flexibly, and appropriately to changing social conditions, from the local to the more global level;

Preparation for work/career development

- Prepare students for the transition from adolescence to adulthood, and from school to employment (meant as “general employability” rather than specific training);

Instilling values

- Support and instil cultural, moral, and/or spiritual values. Personal and interpersonal values such as non-violence, anti-racism, honesty, and justice, individual responsibility, and service to the community are basic ones our society upholds.

These purposes must be pursued within a safe, supportive environment for students, which values and supports diver-

sity of race, culture, class, gender, and physical or intellectual ability. We believe that school organization, staffing, and curriculum should be organized around these identified purposes, and accountability mechanisms should also flow from acceptance of these as the key purposes of the school system.

We stress that any discussion of purposes of schooling in Ontario must acknowledge the unique framework for publicly funded education in the province. Although English and French, public and separate components share common purposes, the Catholic and francophone components also have particular and explicit mandates. Franco-Ontarian schools are charged with developing and supporting not only the French language but also the French culture, within the minority context of dispersed Franco-Ontarian communities. Roman Catholic schools operate within a framework of the heritage and tradition of Roman Catholicism. The right of these groups to have their own schools and to determine priorities is constitutionally guaranteed.

It is important to emphasize that we see the first priority of schools to be the intellectual nurturing of students. When we speak of literacies, we do so meaning a program that starts with, but goes well beyond, basic skills, to include problem-solving and critical thinking. We believe that schooling should be enriching, challenging, and intellectually rewarding. We also believe that when efforts are spread too thinly, teachers and schools find it difficult to provide such experiences to students.

In this chapter, we are simply introducing what we believe are the purposes for Ontario schools. Throughout all the chapters of this report, we will be developing in more detail how we believe schools might achieve these purposes. Agreement on purposes provides the basis for identifying and pursuing priorities, with the understanding that the latter may vary from group to group, community to community, and even year to year, as contexts and conditions change. As we have pointed out, however, you can hardly agree on priorities unless you agree on purposes.

We acknowledge that the list of purposes we have given will be controversial for some people. Preparing young people for employment or career education, for instance, is rejected or minimized as a purpose of schooling by those who value a traditional liberal education for all, or who are concerned about schools serving the agendas of business. On

“In light of the debate about what should be taught in schools, not only the functions of the education system, but the role and work of the classroom teacher needs to be defined by the Ministry of Education and Training.

Schools are a part of the larger community and, as such, the two are interdependent. A team approach to education should exist in which schools maintain an open line of communication with parents and other sectors of society.”

Elementary teachers of Peel Board of Education

the other hand, we know that for most students and parents, preparation for employment ranks high, and thus needs to be stated as an explicit purpose.

Even for those who can support the list, the apparent consensus may fade somewhat when we move to action. What happens when purposes conflict? For instance, if most available jobs are low-level, requiring few if any skills, does this mean that schools are excused from providing high-quality programs to all students? We would argue that the central or primary purpose is intellectual development, including high levels of literacy and numeracy, and that preparing young people to participate in life in a modern democratic society requires quality programs for all.

In any case, because we cannot predict in any precise sense which jobs will be available, or which jobs students might prefer, or what the characteristics of jobs will be over a long working life, we would argue that it is best to provide every student with a strong general education and an ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Schools in the broader community: A framework

We believe it is vital to situate schools in the context of other social institutions in the broader community, such as the family, religious institutions, and community agencies. In a brief to the Commission, Daniel Keating, from the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, calls for looking at “education as a system, interconnected with other broad social

“Neither good citizenship nor personal fulfillment is possible without a good education.”³

Peter Emberley and Waller Newell

systems and with fundamental processes of human development.”

We link our statement of purposes with an assumption that schools are a key component of a healthy community and a healthy society. Such a community supports and fosters healthy human development. This is the approach of the recent report of the Premier’s Council on Health, Well-Being, and Social Justice, called *Yours, Mine, and Ours*.⁴ To grow into healthy functioning adults, children need care and nurturing over a long period of time. Families and communities are responsible for providing the kinds of social environments that support the health and well-being of children; foster their increasing ability to cope with change, stress, and new experiences; and build their growing academic competence. The Premier’s Council report calls for a revamping of communities’ approaches to child-rearing responsibilities.

How are schools different from other social institutions? We argue that the community’s responsibility to children focuses on all aspects of care and healthy development, and the entire community shares in this task. Within this social context, however, it seems clear that schools have a particular responsibility for children’s learning and the development of competence.⁵ Schools have been given the responsibility for children’s formal education, and are thus “learning communities.” This is the primary responsibility we assign them.

Obviously all social institutions need to work together, more frequently and more effectively than in the past, to provide the best conditions for the healthy development and growth of children. Families, businesses, social and recreational agencies, religious institutions, community groups,

including those representing the arts, schools – all must contribute to what is really a collective responsibility. The particular responsibility of each institution will vary, however, depending on what facet of child development is involved.

Within such a framework, we believe it is possible for schools to do two things: first, have reasonable (but high) expectations for learning, and second, ensure that these expectations are met. We believe that schools can do more in terms of student learning, but only if they (and particularly teachers) are not expected to assume *sole* responsibility for building self-esteem; compensate for parental abuse, impoverished backgrounds, and nutritional deprivation; offer new models for solving conflicts; provide for physical exercise; and make the Ontario workforce more globally competitive. Teachers and principals have told us that they feel caught on the horns of a dilemma with regard to these two sets of contradictory demands: we must find a way of supporting the focus of teachers on what should be their top priority, student learning.

Primary and shared responsibilities

It is unreasonable to expect the schools to pick up the slack when families fall apart, religious institutions no longer attract the young, children are malnourished, drug addiction is rampant, prime-time television programs are vacuous and educationally bankrupt, and gang members, athletes, and narcissistic celebrities are the admired adolescent role models.⁶

John Goodlad

We are arguing that schools are differentiated from other social institutions dealing with children (such as families, summer camps, and social welfare agencies) by having responsibility for formal teaching and learning, and they serve commonly (but not universally) accepted purposes. We can also distinguish between what could be termed *primary* and *shared* responsibilities of schools. The primary responsibilities of schools are, according to our framework, related to high-level competence, what we are terming literacies of a cognitive or academic nature.

By speaking of shared responsibilities, we are not implying that they are of lesser importance. The ability to form and sustain healthy relationships, for instance, is critical for children, but we argue that developing this ability is not a

primary purpose of schooling, although schools share in the responsibility. Families, community agencies, youth groups, religious organizations, and schools all have a role to play, with families probably playing the biggest role.

In discharging social responsibilities that must be shared with a broad spectrum of other groups and agencies within the community, we do assign to the school, and especially to the principal, a pivotal role in brokering the delivery of these other services to children. We also make what we believe is a necessary distinction between what schools and teachers are responsible for. Teachers, we believe, are essentially responsible for the primary purpose of the school, namely learning. Many others join with the school in accomplishing its shared or secondary purposes.

The Stormont Dundas and Glengarry County Board of Education, for instance, states in a recent report:

Schools cannot continually assume the responsibilities of society and hope to attain the high standards and expectations set by that same society in ... relationship to educational goals.⁷

This school board suggests that schools take lead roles in relation to reading, writing, and mathematics competencies that go beyond the basic skills, as well as use of information technology, analysis of data, and thinking skills. Other responsibilities, often now assumed by schools alone, are better shared with the community (including parents, social agencies, industries, and other community resources), because schools cannot do the job alone. If students are to understand advanced technology, for example, they will need opportunities to learn and work with business and industry.

Ensuring that students develop flexibility, eagerness to learn, and the ability to work in teams is a responsibility shared by schools, parents, and other community organizations, as are citizenship, social responsibility, leadership and initiative, and coping with change. In some cases, schools and community may share equally, while in others, family and community may take the lead.

Linking purposes with responsibilities

Looking back at our set of purposes, only the first one, intellectual development and ensuring high-level literacies, is primary. The rest are shared with parents, the religious organizations, and community groups. It remains our conviction, this being said, that teachers want to deal with their

“What is the bottom line? More and more is being expected of us but none of the previous responsibilities has been deleted. Sooner or later, something will have to give. For the sake of ourselves and our students it is time to say NO to any more changes.”

Teachers, Park Street Collegiate Institute, QUILT

students with care and compassion. This means, at times, getting involved in individual counselling and giving special attention to children and adolescents living under difficult circumstances.

One of the reasons for trying to clarify purposes, and for distinguishing between exclusive and shared responsibilities, is to support a stronger and more focused sense of accountability in public education. If schools are responsible for everything, they are accountable for nothing. A clearer set of purposes will help schools focus their efforts and gather information about how well they are doing in achieving such purposes.

At the same time, it would be both foolish and irresponsible to ignore needs beyond academic learning; we are talking rather about a shift in emphasis. Teachers and schools must respond to students as human beings, with all the wonderful complexity this involves. Although the highest priority for teachers is to develop competence in literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, and so on, they do this within a rich community context. If no other persons or institutions are ready and able to pick up non-academic needs, schools can hardly ignore them, especially in the short term.

We argue, however, that such non-academic needs should not be the responsibility of teachers. Teachers need to be able to focus on what they are trained and prepared to do, that is, to teach, knowing that they and their students are well supported by others in the community. What we suggest is a focused strategy of building alliances with other persons and agencies who can work with schools. In other words, to meet a wide range of health, social, and emotional needs, and to prepare students for the world of work and for build-

ing families of their own, schools share responsibility with families, with business and labour, with health and social agencies, and with the rest of the community. And when families, for any number of reasons, are not able to provide the support needed, schools are among the other institutions that must work together to support young people and assist their families.

How can this be done without compromising the primary purposes of schools in the teaching/learning area? Teachers need to know that resources are available for students who need them, but teachers themselves are not usually the ones to provide such services directly. In many cases, community resources can be brought into the schools, and students can also be encouraged to move out into the community. Such links will help with community awareness, with building knowledge about possible career and life choices, and with developing a variety of life skills in students. The strategies for building such alliances and partnerships will be developed throughout this report.

With regard to gender and ethno-cultural equity concerns, some of the questions are similar, but there is an important distinction: differences of gender, race, language, and culture are not deficits, and must not be treated as such. Rather, they represent different contexts, knowledge, and skills that children may bring to school, and if these are not acknowledged and valued by schools, children are likely to be less able to learn.

We believe that schools and teachers are responsible for providing supportive learning environments for all students. But again, if schools are to be able to deal sensitively and effectively with children from diverse backgrounds, they will

do well to draw on additional resources to help. In this case, however, the most accessible and perhaps valuable resources may be those of the students themselves and their parents, supplemented by others in the community.

Although we are clarifying purposes, we are quick to acknowledge that this is a difficult and elusive task. In a diverse society like ours, it will not be easy to get agreement, even on general guidelines. In different contexts and different times, priorities will, and should, change. Judgments still need to be made, and disagreements will still be pervasive. The answers to the question “what are schools for?” will never lend themselves to easy agreement.

The hidden curriculum

In considering what schools are for, there is an important distinction between what people think schools ought to do and what they actually do. We have identified purposes that include developing literacies, preparing young people for life in a modern democratic society, and preparing them for productive work.

At a recent national consultation on education sponsored by the Council of Ministers of Education, Norman Henchey, the keynote speaker, pointed out that schools, from kindergarten through graduate schools, perform several functions that may not be officially acknowledged, among them the following: to socialize and control students; to “sort, sift and certify” students; to provide custodial care; to train in useful skills; and to use the implicit or hidden curriculum of rituals and relationships to prepare the young for the job market.⁸ Henchey’s point is that schools do these things, and are expected to continue doing so, although such functions are not usually recognized in more deliberately stated purposes or goals of education.

Take an example so obvious we rarely stop to consider it. From the beginning of universal public education, and never more critically than today, schools have provided what Henchey calls custodial care to society; in plain language, they baby-sit our children. Heaven alone knows how working families would cope if schools did not look after children for a substantial portion of each weekday. No-one came to us to complain of this expenditure by the state; indeed, no-one mentioned it at all.

Sandro Contenta, the former education reporter for the *Toronto Star*, argues that the hidden curriculum in our

schools teaches students submissiveness and passivity, because “submitting to the status quo is prized and rewarded.”⁹ That this teaching is not deliberate and explicit often makes it more difficult to recognize and to change, in spite of the fact that it may fly in the face of statements of purpose that stress developing critical thinkers. In other words, the rhetoric of statements of vision or purpose may be quite different from the reality of practice.

The same can be said of rote learning. Drilling by rote, a historian says, “required, above all, docility and obedience in the pupil, and in the teacher an ability to make punishment an imminent reality ... No occasion was given, if it could be avoided, for requiring the pupil to think.”¹⁰ In a somewhat modified form, this critique still resonates today. It has both intellectual and social consequences. It produces, as Harvard educator Howard Gardner has demonstrated, children with some knowledge but little understanding. It also contains clear messages about how the real world really works. “The separation of knowledge into sequential bits, the hierarchical flow of authority, the spoon-feeding of information: all of it preaches a tale where submitting to the status quo is prized and rewarded.”¹¹

Others say that the very process of repeatedly drilling students is a recipe for passivity, and wonder how such rigid and mechanistic techniques can produce the kind of creative young people with critical thinking skills that society claims it wants and needs to see. Getting the right answer becomes the be-all and end-all, while knowing how to solve a problem or apply learning takes a back seat.

But it must be said that for us the proper purpose of the school system is not to produce young women and men who are mostly characterized by deference, docility, passivity, or submissiveness. We want schools to develop students – all students – who are feisty, questioning, creative, imaginative, autonomous, and independent; and in the course of this report we will describe the kind of school system that we believe will achieve that exciting objective.

Another major but hidden contribution of schools is that they reinforce the belief that success in school is a relatively simple matter of merit. Those who are brighter, work harder, behave properly, and follow the rules, are the successful ones. That is, they will go on to university, and eventually to society’s best paid and highest status jobs. By definition,

then, those who don’t make it have only their own moral and intellectual inadequacies to blame.

It is true that schools can make a crucial difference in helping a child overcome the deficits of a disadvantaged background, if they deliberately and systematically set out to do so. But not enough schools do so. The fact remains that study after study continues to show that while schools matter, the best indicator of success in school is the income and status of one’s parents. Students who are streamed into the basic- and general-level high school programs, instead of the advanced, are disproportionately from non-professional backgrounds.

It is at least arguable that while educational success is substantially a function of chance – the luck of being born to certain parents in certain neighbourhoods – the role of the school system is to legitimize the process by making it appear that merit is the main determinant of such success. As one academic wryly says, “Statistically speaking, the best advice we can give to a poor child keen to get ahead through education is to choose richer parents.”¹²

For the past quarter century, the Toronto Board of Education has been one of the few school districts in Canada to track regularly the background of its students. Its 1991 survey, for example, found that 92 percent of students whose parents were professionals ended up in the schools’ university-bound programs, but only 60 percent of those whose parents were unskilled labourers did the same.¹³

There is also evidence that students in advanced-level classes are challenged academically in a way that is a world apart from the treatment given children in other levels. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, for as Andrew Nikiforuk

purposes of education can afford to ignore the dangers of the hidden curriculum.

Values

Although we have not elaborated on all the purposes we propose, we want to say more about the teaching of values, because it is such an important issue. The role of schools in transmitting values is both complex and at times controversial, and we have had no easy time coming to grips with it. There is no such thing as value-free education. Sometimes values are taught explicitly, while in other cases, as we have seen, they are part of the hidden curriculum. Again, we suggest it is important for educators to be critically aware of the values they are transmitting, not least the inadvertent ones.

While many parents and educators want education to be based on a strong coherent set of values, there is less agreement on exactly what that set of values should be. For both the supporters of traditional education, as an example, and for those who are particularly concerned with inclusiveness and equity, values are a top priority. It is not always self-evident, however, that these two groups, or others, would agree on precisely which values schools are to be inculcating. Yet these are extreme positions. The question remains as to whether we have a centre that will hold.

Schools have the responsibility of helping students develop values related to the welfare of society. What happens, however, when good jobs become more problematic, as university admissions tighten up, as economic anxiety and technological uncertainty continue to cast their shadows, is that pressure to compete for individual success, for playing by whatever rules are required “to make it,” becomes irresistible, and never mind what the Education Act says are the goals of the system.

Although these conflicting views were certainly well represented among those who spoke to us, there were also many students, teachers, parents, and trustees who spoke to us of schools that would both reflect and communicate attitudes of care and compassion, of trust, honesty, integrity, and of opposition to violence and racism.

All this puts the members of this Commission in a peculiar quandary. We prove to be an old-fashioned group in certain respects. Not only do we love the world of learning, we happen to believe in certain traditional values.

puts it, education’s first maxim is “What you expect, you get.”¹⁴ If little is expected, students aren’t likely to work hard to master difficult concepts and subject matter, and in fact will be given few opportunities to do so.

This, then, is what in practice too many schools do, in spite of the best efforts of many devoted teachers and however much the rhetoric insists that merit and fairness are at play. This Commission, however, believes strongly that it is time rhetoric became reality, and many of our recommendations are aimed at giving all students, whatever their backgrounds, the same opportunity to make the most of the challenging schools we envisage.

What can be learned from this discussion of the hidden curriculum and these unacknowledged functions of schools? The danger of the hidden curriculum is that as long as it remains hidden, the assumptions and values on which it is based are not examined. It is argued, for instance, that the bureaucratic nature of the school system was appropriate when students were being prepared for a factory economy, in which most jobs required people to follow rules, learn a particular and unvarying sequence of skills, and fit into a hierarchical work structure. If, however, these are no longer the characteristics and skills needed for the world of the 21st century, schools have to change.

It is important to note that the hidden curriculum is usually the agenda of society, not just of the school. The challenge for schools is to become aware of society’s expectations and their own practices, and then to socialize students into organizational life without stifling them, to foster creativity and critical thinking within a setting that balances the needs of the individual and the group. No discussion of

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by learned engineers;
Children poisoned by educated physicians;
Infants killed by trained nurses; and
Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.
So, I am suspicious of education.

My request is:

Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.

A holocaust survivor

It should be unmistakably clear from this *cri du coeur* that we have the highest expectations of what we would love schools to accomplish.

We are convinced that, as difficult as it sometimes seems, and as incomplete as it will always be, a part of the task of schools must be to transmit to students some sense of honesty, truth, civility, social justice, and co-operation, and a determination to combat violence, racism, gender inequality, and environment degradation. Some of these values relate to personal morality, and others to social issues. We have no illusions that all our fellow Ontarians will agree with this list any more than we feel they will be unanimous in agreeing with all our other recommendations. But we do feel that the vast majority of Ontarians support these as values necessary for any kind of equitable and caring society. And we believe all schools in Ontario should seek to transmit them to their students.

When schools attempt to communicate values that students know are often ignored by the society around them, by different social institutions, including the schools themselves and the teachers within them, cynicism about and disrespect for the larger mission of the schools can easily result. We, however, have a higher regard than this for the majority of schools and teachers. Students will see their flaws and recognize their inconsistencies. Teachers are not gods, but, as we have said, they are our heroes, and we believe that in the general day-to-day life of schools they will reflect these basic values we have mentioned. To suggest that educators

“The school’s role should be to prepare students for life and not for employment. The skills necessary to survive in the work place should be taught by the employer or in the very least in a joint school/employer enterprise.”

K. Johnston, R. Leatham, D. McAndrews,
and T. McClenahan
Recently retired educators

quit the field of values because both individuals and society fail to live up to them is a vision of despair that ultimately serves students not at all.

We should point out that implicit in the question of values are the views we transmit of our identity as Canadians. The issue is particularly sensitive at this turbulent point in our history, with the difficult quest for a renewed relationship with Quebec in the federation, the urgency of finding a new partnership with the aboriginal populations, and the diverse cultural input of newcomers from all over the world. We often feel that forces pulling us apart are stronger than those nurturing our cohesion as a country. Schools are the locus of many such cultural encounters and shocks.

Throughout our report we encourage the many wonderful initiatives and projects developed to foster the mutual respect and understanding so necessary in both Ontario and global societies. As part of this emphasis, we stress the celebration of our differences, especially as they should be reflected in the teaching of literature and history. In so doing, however, we do not intend to downgrade or diminish in any way the sense of pride, the identity, and the values that Canadians celebrate in the stories, the events, the practices, or heroes that give meaning to our heritage and tradition. They are an important part of our very roots. We need to nurture our roots, since without them, individuals and societies cannot grow. That, too, must be a purpose of schooling.

Schools may attempt to represent values –respect for knowledge, for example – to which society merely pays lip service – and the students know it. Benjamin Barber, writing in *Harper's*, illustrates the point with some quiz questions, including the following:

- A good way to prepare for a high-income career and acquire status in our society is
- a) win a slam-dunk contest
 - b) take over a company and sell its assets
 - c) start a successful rock band
 - d) earn a professional degree
 - e) become a kindergarten teacher ...

Familiarity with *Henry IV, Part II*, is likely to be of vital importance in

- a) planning a corporate take-over
- b) evaluating a budget cut in the Department of Education
- c) initiating a medical malpractice lawsuit
- d) writing an impressive job resume
- e) taking a test on what our 17-year-olds know.¹⁵

Conclusion

We start with the idea that publicly funded schools exist to serve all children, and we identify that what makes them different from other institutions and agencies is their responsibility for formal teaching and learning.

We propose a basic set of purposes focused on intellectual development, learning to learn, citizenship, preparation for work/career development, and instilling values. In addition, we acknowledge that within the unique framework for publicly funded

education in Ontario, the Roman Catholic and francophone systems have particular mandates in addition to fulfilling the common set of purposes.

We also distinguish between the school's primary responsibility related to high-level competence and what we call literacies of a cognitive or academic nature, and the shared responsibility for the health and well-being of children in which the family, religious organizations, and a broad spectrum of other community agencies also have a role to play.

We discuss briefly the hidden curriculum, noting that it is usually the agenda of society, not just of the school. We believe that the assumptions and values on which this hidden curriculum is based need to be examined, in order to ensure that what people think schools ought to do is what they actually do.

We stress certain values that we believe are necessary for any kind of equitable and caring society and we believe all schools in Ontario should seek to transmit them to their students. We emphasize that among these values are the views we transmit of our identity as Canadians. This must include both a celebration of our differences, and a sense of pride in the stories, events, practices, or heroes that give meaning to our heritage and tradition.

Endnotes

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What Is Learning?

So far, we have considered the history and context of education in Ontario and the major issues that underlie current debates about it, and we have attempted to articulate our sense of the purposes of schooling, which centre on learning and teaching. Before we can proceed to examine aspects of schooling in greater detail, and make recommendations to support and improve the province's formal elementary and secondary systems, we must describe more fully some basic principles of learning (and, in the next chapter, of teaching); these, after all, inform our recommendations about curriculum and teacher education. Our essential task is to envision and describe an education system that can best facilitate learning for students. But, first, there is the question of the nature of learning, and how it is nurtured and facilitated.

To learn, according to both *Webster's* and the *Concise Oxford* dictionaries, is to gain knowledge, understanding, or skill through study, instruction, or experience. Learning is the process of becoming able to comprehend or do, moving from lesser to greater competence. Human beings learn throughout their lives, but the process is especially obvious and accelerated early in life. While we learn constantly and everywhere, we define formal learning as the goal of education, which is institutionalized in schools. Learning in schools is the deliberately designed outcome of purposeful interactions. To some extent, what is to be learned in school has been predetermined by the larger society, by the educational authorities who represent it. In school, learning is not left to chance – the material to be learned is taught.

In recent decades, scholars have made considerable progress in understanding how learning occurs and how it can be promoted in schools, by:

- appreciating the value of motivation in learning, and the place of success and self-esteem as a learner in being motivated to learn;
- understanding the importance of sequencing what is to be learned, so that the learner builds on prior knowledge;
- making it clear that learners must reflect upon and think about what they already know and how it connects to other knowledge;
- being aware of the way interaction in pairs and groups facilitates learning.

All these are contributions of experimental science to the applied science of teaching for learning. In addition, experi-

ments have revealed the importance of meta-cognitive strategies – thinking about thinking – as a way of taking learners to more complex levels of comprehension and competence.¹

The education system must give high priority to doing precisely that. The results of provincial, national, and international testing show that Ontario students do reasonably well on measures of basic or lower-order skills and knowledge – in math, for example, facts about numbers and simple arithmetical operations – but appear to do less well on measures of higher-level skills, such as estimating and problem-solving.² Similarly, in tests of literacy, students in Ontario and other provinces tend to perform fairly strongly when decoding text and answering simple recall/comprehension questions, but many fall short in being able to synthesize, to infer, or to extend what they have read. (This same pattern is seen in Ontario's adult population.)³

It is these higher-level thinking skills we must strengthen, not simply teaching a specific body of knowledge, but teaching students to look at the connections between what they are learning and what they already know, and to build on it.

What do we know about how learning happens?

Learning occurs from cradle to grave

While education tends to be defined as a formal process, institutionalized in schools and other educational and training organizations, learning is both formal and informal, and is not limited to school. A classroom is only one example of a learning community. Learning begins long before kindergarten and continues long after graduation. It happens before school begins in the morning, and after the last bell

“Learning is internal ... and there is only one external measure of its existence: behaviour ... and although learning continues throughout one’s lifetime, the most critical time for any ... human being to evolve their learning instincts and skills ... is during their youth; during that time we refer to as their years of ‘formal education’ for adult life.”

Gary Bicker, Toronto

voices

rings. As all parents know, children start learning when they are born (if not before) and it would be very difficult – in fact, impossible – to stop them from doing so.

Learning occurs with and without direct instruction

While the learner may not be conscious of it, learning is always an active process; on the other hand, teaching may or may not be direct and deliberate. For example, most parents do not set out to teach the language used in the home, but children are immersed in it and learn to communicate in it during the first years of life.

Schools exist in order to help young people and adults acquire knowledge and skills not acquired instinctively, by osmosis or immersion; instead, schools use instruction so that students obtain access to oral and written expertise. What is deliberately taught at school is the formal curriculum; what may also be taught, although not deliberately, is what is usually called the “hidden” curriculum – the values, behaviours, attitudes, and information teachers and students communicate to one another, however unwittingly. There is, as well, the “missing” curriculum, which is what is not taught and, by implication, is not valued. (Whose voices are not heard in our histories? Whose pictures are not seen in our textbooks?)

The missing curriculum would include, as an example, a unit on 20th-century Canadian literature that made no mention of writers who are female, members of racial minorities, aboriginal or French-Canadian. The personal, negative message to students in those groups: good contemporary literature is not written by people like you. Native students might assume that a Canadian history that starts

from the time of the European settlers was telling them their culture and history are not “Canadian.” Other students may not notice what is missing or, having noticed it, may accept it uncritically. In either case, the students are being given a curriculum that is less inclusive and less rich than either reality or a good education system demands. It is difficult but essential to remember that students learn what they are taught, whether or not teaching is intentional.

Over time, students must learn to be self-rewarding and self-correcting if they are to continue to grow in competence after they leave school; while they are students they must be able to depend on instructors for helpful and timely feedback. Errors must be pointed out, and youngsters must be reassured that occasional regression and forgetting are part of learning, and not a serious stumbling block or major failure. Not only must they know when an answer is wrong or inadequate, they must know why, so they can use that information for further learning. In their capacity to individualize feedback, as well as instruction, computers have the potential to become an important tool for self-assessment and self-correction.

The idea that we learn from our errors, and can hardly learn without them, is extraordinarily important, and it must be understood by teachers and conveyed to students. They must be encouraged to see learning as a process of continual improvement, rather than as a contest you either win or lose. This rather common-sense idea is not obvious to students, and there is ample evidence that many children develop a pattern of giving up when they don’t succeed immediately. They first begin to falter after the early years in school because, while they were able to master the work easily, they did not develop the habit or expectation of having to improve – for example, they treat a first attempt at an essay or composition as the finished product, rather than as a draft.

Learning depends on practice

Learning is greatly dependent on practice. Knowledge is lost unless it is used and applied. Like instruction, practice may be deliberate or be a by-product of daily need and use. While initial instruction depends on a more knowledgeable other person, practice may be solitary (as in the piano practice that follows a lesson); or it may be shared with others focused on the same tasks (practising for a school play, for

example), whether or not all of them have reached the same level of competence.

However, students seldom learn new ideas through practice and drill; rather, those exercises consolidate what they already know, and enable them to commit important principles to memory.⁴

The best practice is purposeful, and involves developing skills that achieve real goals: using new words to write a story or new computing techniques to solve problems. (This is sometimes described as “authentic learning.”) Skills must be repeatedly reinforced through practice until they become automatic. The acquisition of new concepts or greater competence depends on thorough assimilation of previous knowledge, which is cumulative and grows from a solid base. Such fundamental codes as the alphabet and number systems, which are acquired through practice and application, are building blocks for everything that follows.

Learning is a social process

While we learn through such solitary activities as reading, listening, thinking, practising, and applying what we have learned, our essentially social and communicative nature as human beings enables us to profit from practising with others. In fact, we think and understand more rapidly when we work together, because of the link between talking and thinking, between explaining and understanding.⁵ Advances in understanding the social nature of learning have implications for the structure of learning opportunities, either in or out of the classroom. As sound theory and extensive research have shown, learning in small groups can be highly effective as long as individual and group responsibilities are clearly defined.⁶ Similarly, peer and cross-age tutoring can be powerful ways of extending a school’s teaching and learning resources.⁷

There is another sense in which learning is social: especially, but not exclusively among the young, it is embedded in the personal. Most learners, children in particular, respond to warm, caring teachers and the relationship with them acts as a strong motivator. Teachers should remember the maxim that “If they don’t know you care, they don’t care if they know” when they are reflecting on ways to create a context for classroom learning.

Learning occurs most readily when learners want to learn

Not only does learning depend on practice, it depends on motivation: people learn best and fastest when they feel a need to know something, and can see a clear reason for learning. While pain and fear can act as powerful motivators, in a normal social setting such as a classroom, positive motivators are clearly more effective than negative ones, rewards more productive than punishments.

There are two kinds of motivation: the first is intrinsic – learning something because it is interesting and because the learner wants to know more or gain greater expertise. The second motivator is an external reward: a happy-face sticker at the top of the paper, an A on the assignment, the offer of a job. While students are not always highly motivated, teachers can expect they are most likely to perform best when they are convinced that assigned material is interesting, important, or useful to them, or when they have had some part in selecting it.⁸

While both types of motivation may lead to learning, what we call the “love of learning” comes from intrinsic motivation. Rewards can help get students started at times, but research indicates that the reward should not become overly important to the learner: children who are motivated by concrete, short-term rewards (marks, etc.) are less likely to continue learning once the reward has been received.⁹ Because reward becomes the reason for learning, the only motivation for taking the next step is to receive the next reward. Teachers are responsible for evaluating students’ progress, but they must be aware of the compelling disadvantages in strongly emphasizing marks as an end in themselves.

Making connections between school and community

Patricia Bonham, a Grade 7 student at Holy Family Elementary School in Oakville, won an award at the Hamilton and District Science and Engineering Fair at McMaster University. Her project compared pollution in four of Oakville's streams, and

she hopes her work will make a real difference to the community. She reported her findings on the raw sewage in one creek to health officials, and is asking them for help in confirming her theory that the source of the contamination is a faulty sewage system in a nearby neighbourhood.

We must nurture curiosity, make learning interesting and challenging, and help youngsters, especially in their early years, to appreciate the challenges and pleasures of learning. Only then can we develop citizens with a sense of obligation to do their personal best, not merely for a mark or a pay cheque, but because they derive satisfaction from the challenge of working a problem through.

All of this is complicated by the fact that motivation-learning is a circular process. Motivated students learn more, but, in truth, more skilled and knowledgeable students are more motivated: students work hardest at their "best" subjects. Dull material indifferently taught is counterproductive to learning. However, the assumption that "fun" schooling will automatically increase learning is equally misguided. Students need to be motivated to accept challenges; they also need to be challenged to remain motivated. Nothing is more motivating than competence, and increasing competence is the essence of schooling. As students acquire competence, they perceive the power of knowledge, and are motivated to stretch themselves even more.

Most children come to school eager to learn, full of enthusiasm for the books, the pictures, and computers they see in the classroom, and are full of questions. Good teachers keep that eagerness alive and growing and help children and young people become increasingly competent.

Learners have to know how to go on learning

It would seem that students must be conscious of their own thinking processes before they are able to solve new problems, problems that have more than one possible answer, or problems that call for critical inference and analysis. They

must ask themselves key questions, and ask questions of their answers. In other words, if they are to become strong, independent, lifelong learners, students must become their own teachers.

While this depends, in part, on maturation – for example, young children are less able than adolescents to predict accurately how well they know or can do something – it is equally true that many students will never learn to examine their own thinking unless that skill is expressly taught. Most often this occurs when a teacher models "thinking about thinking" for students, and then has them practice by talking through the solution to a problem. One of the most effective methods is to put the learner in the position of teacher to another student.

As every teacher knows, there is no better way to find out whether you understand something than to try to teach it to someone else. After several such experiences, it becomes increasingly automatic for students to go through a process of self-examination, to ask themselves: "Did it work? How am I doing? Does this make sense?" Of course, learning cannot proceed unless it is based on a body of knowledge; you cannot ask "Does this make sense?" about a text written in a language you cannot read. The ability to examine your own thinking becomes useful only when there is a body of knowledge on which it can be used. But what large-scale assessments have shown is that students often have the knowledge, but not the generic thinking-about-thinking skills needed to get beyond the basics. Increasingly, educators have come to understand that anything less is inadequate.

We should set high standards for our children and be demanding of them in what we expect from their schoolwork ... We place too much emphasis on remediation, and too much emphasis on mastery. Instead, we need to reaffirm a commitment to excellence in our schools, in the way the corporate world has been doing. In practical terms, we need to expect more from our children ... more work ... is not [necessarily] more challenge ... We need to challenge children to the utmost, not only by giving them more work, but by giving them more difficult but also more meaningful work.¹⁰

Learning is different for different learners

The question of whether different people or groups learn differently is an old one, but the evidence is still largely theoretical. Thus, some educators suggest the reader who devel-

“We learn best where we like to learn and where the purposes, rewards, and applications of learning are clear and reinforced.”

Joseph Gold, professor, University of Guelph

voices

ops more slowly learns more readily by listening than by looking. But it is not clear whether they are describing students who have difficulty reading because they have not been well instructed or because they have some specific visual or learning disability, rather than because they are readers who have a different learning style.¹¹

Others ascribe preferences in learning style or environment to differences in ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status, but it is unclear whether such differences are related to characteristics of the learners or of their situations.¹² It may be that the reason many female students prefer smaller groups or less competitive situations is that males, as has been well documented, tend to compete more successfully for teacher attention.¹³

While it is difficult to substantiate the belief that there are significant differences in fundamental ways of learning, it is certainly true that individuals have varied preferences for learning conditions: some want a quiet place to study, others insist that noise and surrounding activity are necessary. Some are more able to focus on and remember material if it is presented graphically, while others find images distracting. Some learn better when they have more direction, others when they have less.¹⁴ If parents are willing to accommodate some of these differences (even among siblings), and judge according to results rather than on the basis of fixed ideas about proper learning, conflict can be avoided. Teachers, too, have to be inclusive and flexible in the way they help children learn, and in the diversity of the materials and approaches they use because such variety is likely to create a more successful context for learning.¹⁵

While people vary in general intelligence, there is evidence that intelligence is multifaceted, that some people are more intelligent in one way of learning than another, and that they learn best when their strongest abilities are being engaged. Schools most readily reward linguistic and logical-mathematical kinds of intelligence (as do intelligence tests). Students whose most-developed abilities are spatial, musical, social, or kinetic (movement) are at a disadvantage in school, which typically under-utilizes these approaches to learning and knowing. The implication is that school curricula should be designed to engage all types of intelligences in order to provide equal access to learning for all students.¹⁶

If (as some research suggests) these individual differences are quite marked, then schools, in order to carry out their

primary mandate of making children literate and numerate, must also respond to the diverse abilities children have, using these abilities as routes by which children may gain understanding and competence with words and numbers. To do otherwise is to risk the opportunities many children could have for the success that depends so heavily on literacy and numeracy. The Commission's emphasis on society's need for literate and numerate learners in no way lessens its belief that these differences must be acknowledged.

There are barriers to learning

Although humans are natural learners, there is abundant evidence that the ability to learn is impeded by unfulfilled basic needs: for food, shelter, and well-being. People can learn when they are hungry, cold, or sick, but their ability and the rate at which they do so are severely impeded. This is equally true of young people who are poorly cared for or who are chronically frightened by violence or the threat of violence at home or at school, by sexual harassment, racism, homophobia, and other forms of bullying and persecution. Moreover, they are unlikely to taste academic success. For many children, poverty and disadvantage are strongly associated with learning problems and school failure; furthermore, many students know that unsafe schools cannot be good learning environments.

Another factor that can interfere with the ability to learn is a hostile or unsupportive socio-cultural environment. If the school offers little support in a student's home language or cultural heritage, if students do not see themselves reflected in the curriculum or among the teaching staff, they may

Writers in electronic residence (WIER)

This program links secondary school students with professional writers. English and Language Arts classrooms equipped with computers, modems, and software make it possible for students to contact distinguished writers, authors, and poets, who willingly read and comment on students' work. Last year, 70 classes in 58 schools were linked to 10 writers. The WIER system, which is the brainchild of Toronto secondary school teacher Trevor Owen, is now located at York University and reaches students in every part of Canada.

This kind of program makes a clear connection between writing in class and writing for a living. Students learn from authors who do it constantly, about editing and revising a work before it is published. What may seem a tedious classroom exercise takes on life as a real-world activity of people who are talented and renowned. The writers do not act as teachers when they evaluate the work of students, but as professionals whose livelihood depends on the ability to self-evaluate. In the words of one student, "It was an odd pleasure to be taken so seriously."

be less motivated to learn, less confident in themselves as learners, and, therefore, less successful.¹⁷

Schools that acknowledge the missing curriculum by being sensitive to students' identities, and that clearly value diversity, eliminate what can be very powerful impediments to learning; they increase students' motivation to learn, and their confidence and success as learners. This is most likely to happen when the school is open to, and a working part of, its community; otherwise, the school itself can become part of the problem.

The importance of self-esteem in learning and achieving has been hotly debated. Some educators and parents see it as a prerequisite to school success, and the lack of it as a hurdle that must be overcome before learning can proceed.

In fact, there is evidence that self-esteem is both a cause and an effect of academic success.¹⁸ Many children who do poorly in school have quite high self-esteem, according to standardized measures of personality, probably because they are doing well in other areas of life: parents accept them, they are popular with friends, they shine on skates, or what-

ever. Thus, it may be non-productive for teachers to focus principally on self-esteem as a way of increasing students' motivation. On the other hand, it is likely that success in schoolwork would encourage students to think of themselves as good at learning, which would enhance their sense of themselves as learners, which is crucial to their formal education.

The students who understand that part of what they learn, while not immediately useful, will be of future benefit, have a great advantage over those who depend heavily on the immediate environment – the teacher, the learning materials, the attitude of parents and of peers – for motivation. Students who think and act only in the present – and there are many of them – are easily distracted from schoolwork and are more likely to respond to what seems relevant and useful in the here-and-now rather than to promised rewards in a dim and uncertain future.

Community-based education, which takes students out of school and into workplaces and community agencies, and brings local business and professional people into the school, has the potential of connecting the school to real life. So does the use of computers, because technology impresses young people, and connects them to the larger and somehow more "real" world outside the school walls. The computer also offers students control over their own learning, which may help to reduce over-dependency on others and encourage them to be less passive learners.

Learning is also readily derailed by unsocial or anti-social behaviour in the classroom. To the degree that their inattentiveness disrupts the teacher's and the class's focus on the task at hand, easily distracted students may present a barrier to learning for others. In a classroom, an individual problem can quickly become a problem for the group.

Learning for life: The importance of early learning

It is likely that the most developmentally sensitive period for laying the groundwork of later competence and coping occurs during the infant's earliest social interactions, probably in the first two years of life. Basic habits of mind that guide how we interact with others, how we attend to the world, what we focus our attention on, and how we learn to deal with new situations, are shaped in the context of these key social relationships.¹⁹

While all children are learning from (or before) the day they are born, some arrive at school four, five, or six years later with significant learning advantages. While some of this is related to innate cognitive abilities, a great deal of it can be explained environmentally. Such negative influences as lack of stimulation are often associated with poverty and lack of parental understanding of how children develop. Positive factors include a strong literacy environment in the home: children are read to, see their parents read, and learn that what is written or read is important to daily life.

There are more subtle factors as well: we know, for example, that there is a relationship between the frequency and quality of parent-child conversations and the child's success in school in learning to read and write.²⁰ Parenting centres and high-quality child care can also positively affect children's success in school.²¹

Even more important to learning ability than the bond between child and teacher is that between child and parent or other caretaker: it affects both competence and the ability to cope with, or withstand, stress. Perhaps the presence of a nurturing and dependable adult gives children the security needed if they are to feel safe to explore and experiment with the world around them. When children enter school, the connection between the most significant figures in their life – usually their parents – and the school becomes important. In fact, it is a crucial support to their ability to manage in the larger and more impersonal setting.²² As well, as a nurturing adult, the teacher represents continuity for young children moving from the pre-school to the school experience.

Whatever their previous experience, all children come to school knowing, informally, a great deal about language, numbers, and physical objects. Formal schooling must build on the knowledge children bring with them. One of the basic principles of learning is that it proceeds in an orderly way, and is cumulative; an effective teacher – the parent, at home, and the classroom teacher, at school – helps the child to the next step, which depends on knowing what should come next. This is true for learners at all ages, but it is particularly crucial for getting youngsters off to a good start.

“The greatest learning takes place in an environment in which students have reason to ‘buy into’ the learning outcomes ... Both the subject and learning itself must have obvious values and learners must be able to relate them to their life and career goals. The successful learning process demands involvement and can provide the immediate tangible reward of being an enjoyable experience, and the longer-term rewards of meaningfulness and practical relevance.”

Algonquin College of Applied Arts & Technology,
Academic Council

Informal to formal learning:

The transition from home to school

What is different about school is not that it is a place for learning – which happens in the crib and in the kitchen as well as in the classroom. Two extremely important elements differentiate school from pre-school learning contexts.

First, although many parents deliberately teach such skills as counting or letter and word recognition, most learning at home is casual and non-directed and occurs through immersion in a social setting. In school, by contrast, classroom learning is intentional and directed by a professional teacher.

Second, learning in school takes place within a group of peers, instead of one-on-one or two-on-one. The transition to school is from solitary to group learning. Children who get high-quality, pre-school group care before they are old enough for school make the transition more easily and earlier, which gives them advantages as learners.²³

Children arrive at school with different levels of preparedness to interact positively with others, to defer individual gratification, to focus attention, to follow instructions, and, in general, to profit from the classroom setting. Children who can achieve all this will grow in competence and in their ability to cope with frustration. By contrast, children who are less able than their peers to benefit from group learning face increasing frustration and diminishing levels of competence.

The challenge for teachers and other educators is to create a nurturing and supportive environment that is stimulating and challenging, where all children have the opportunity to become more competent. The home environment,

Trent valley global river project

Students at three secondary and two elementary schools in Lindsay are monitoring water quality and carrying out a variety of environmental river- and watershed-study projects. Government and industry have contributed through community partnerships; students communicate among themselves elec-

tronically, and with other students with similar interests and projects, locally, regionally, and internationally. Some of the secondary school students teach telecommunication techniques to students in elementary schools involved in the project, giving the older students an authentic opportunity to use their newly acquired technological skills.

which is such a strong influence in early childhood, continues to shape a child's progress throughout the years of formal education.

Without teaching to the lowest common denominator, the teacher must narrow the gap between the neediest children and those who have social, emotional, or intellectual advantages.

How can classrooms become learning communities? What are the best strategies for ensuring that most – not just many – students become successful school learners? What do we know about what works?

Active teaching and learning

Students and teachers must be actively involved in the learning process if the potential of the classroom as a context for cognitive and social development is to be realized. Passivity is as much an enemy of learning as it is of self-esteem and mental health. An excellent teacher is sensitive to each youngster's interests, achievements, and difficulties. Indeed, research shows that teachers who are most acutely aware of each student's response to a lesson or activity have the fewest problems of discipline and disruption.²⁴ Because they monitor the progress of each student, they know the kind of help each needs, and they provide it appropriately and can give an accurate assessment to a parent, another teacher, or to the student, leaving little doubt about the degree of progress being made and some sense of whether problems are temporary or serious.

Since learning is the enduring growth of competence, it is clear that teachers cannot force students to learn. To the extent that teachers create a supportive and challenging

classroom and curriculum, they will find that most students willingly put forth effort to master new ideas and skills. On the other hand, if material is remote from students' interests, backgrounds, or experiences, if it is insufficiently challenging or beyond the students' level of development, or if students are afraid to make a mistake, their opportunities to learn will be severely curtailed. The resultant boredom and alienation may lead to disruptive behaviour that interferes with everyone's learning.

Exploiting the diversity of the group

An important clue to the best way of exploiting the learning context of the classroom is to capitalize on its uniqueness: unlike the family (but like most other work settings), it is organized around a relatively large group. While one-on-one tutoring is an extremely efficient (as well as extremely expensive) instructional mode, there are very distinct advantages to the group setting: the social nature of human learning makes each learner a potential teacher of peers, and social interaction a prime route to learning.²⁵ While it is truest for children before they become literate and can learn from print as well as from speech, it applies to learners of all ages.

In a classroom, students learn from the teacher and from one another. Teachers who understand the group's potential as a learning vehicle exploit the developmental diversity that is otherwise perceived as (and can, indeed, become) a barrier to learning. Helping a peer in school is excellent preparation for life, for home, for the community, and for work.

Collaborative learning may involve work with children of the same, or of different, ages. It encourages the less developed "learner" to see and reach for the next level of skill or understanding; it also helps the more developed "teacher," in the process of clarifying and explaining material to another person, understand it better.²⁶

Extending the boundaries of the learning environment

When, under the teacher's strong leadership, these experiences are clearly related to the academic curriculum, community visits, workplace experiences, the presence of community members in the classroom – all extend the school's boundaries and show students the reality that learning is lifelong. Schools often give the implicit message that just the opposite is true: that all important learning takes

place within their walls, and can be delivered only by teachers; to the degree they do that, schools become barriers to learning. Schools and teachers cannot possibly replicate the myriad opportunities for learning that exist outside their walls; moving beyond those walls extends learning and, by connecting the curriculum to valued people and valued settings, strengthens its meaning and impact.

Information technology is an increasingly powerful vehicle for enlarging students' learning opportunities; many schools are already connected to networks of information and thinking that lie beyond their own walls. Students are linking up with each other, across school, board, provincial, and national boundaries, sharing information, ideas, and interests. These endeavours force them to use and develop communication skills and to expand perspectives beyond the local school or neighbourhood.

Despite the enormous amount of information technology for learning that already exists, the field is still very young and will obviously be an increasingly powerful force in school education. The passivity that shuts out learning in general is an especially powerful disincentive for some students in conventional classrooms. In so far as technology is used interactively, it has the potential to motivate students and to be an especially effective learning tool, particularly for those who have difficulty with text and lecture formats. Computers can individualize curriculum and pacing, enabling students to work at their own best rate. Most of all, technology offers students access to a world of information, so that the work of learning clearly belongs to them – a world full of choice, decision-making, and the responsibility for asking as well as answering questions.

Creating a learning community that works

A school is a community of learners for teachers and students, and an effective classroom is a community of learners, in which the teacher functions as instructor, facilitator, and observer, and the students learn by listening, talking, helping others, and receiving help from others. Teachers, in observing and monitoring their students' progress and response to the curriculum, are also learners, just as students, in teacher-structured interactions, tutor one another. If school is preparation for life, it must be life-like, with everyone able to do some teaching and a lot of learning.

“Canada enjoys tremendous diversity of cultural expertise because of its multicultural character. If it can find the means to forge a social consensus for building a learning society, it can reap the benefits of this diversity and escape historical burdens that can hamper adaptation.”

Daniel Keating, The Canadian Institute for
Advanced Research

voices

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What Is Teaching?

The central agent in the formal learning process and in the lives of students at school is the teacher. Well-educated and motivated teachers are the most vital component of high-quality education. Throughout their careers, teachers touch the lives of thousands of young people; without their commitment and participation, attempts to improve the school system are bound to fail.

“Learning is a full-blooded, human, social process, and so is teaching.”

R.W. Connell, *Schools and Social Justice*

The quality of teaching is ultimately measured by its impact on students, in terms of what they learn and the degree to which they are engaged in the process: good teaching engages students in learning, and increases what they learn and what they achieve. Beyond helping students absorb the most easily measured learning, good teachers foster a love of learning and provide a supportive classroom atmosphere for all students. But what constitutes good teaching? What instructional approaches are effective? What are the characteristics needed in Ontario’s teachers? Not only do people have different answers to these questions, they feel strongly about their views. A central issue in the current debates is what constitutes good teaching: there is no widespread agreement on what teachers should know and be able to do.

Teaching, unlike many other professions or occupations, has a long, informal tradition that sometimes seems at odds with what is happening in schools today. Most adults (and older children) have spent many years watching teachers at work, and often have unquestioned notions about teaching. When educators suggest, for instance, that learning is better understood as an “active construction of meaning” by the learner (as was done recently in the first version of *The Common Curriculum*), it is not surprising that the public may wonder if schools have been diverted from their proper focus. Powerful, traditional notions of teaching are then at odds with the “expert” notions.

Discussions about teaching are often framed as debates between opposing positions: child-centred versus teacher-directed, or student-centred versus subject-centred. According to the one position, teachers are to impart knowledge to students through direct, systematic instruction, focusing on skills and content. According to the other, teachers are to encourage children to take a more active role in developing their own knowledge, with less direct instruction on the part of the teacher. The educational pendulum seems to swing from one ideology to the other, with teachers, students – and, often, parents – getting hit as it sweeps by.

Such either/or choices, however, tend to misrepresent the complex nature of learning and teaching in the classroom: effective teachers use both approaches, as they direct student learning toward clear goals. Perhaps if accountability for results were to be more clearly established, much of the debate about methods would be defused. The extent of student learning is surely the most relevant indicator of the worth of the teaching strategies used. Acceptance of reasonable, clearly stated standards, together with ongoing assessment of student learning, become important steps in this process.

Characteristics of good teaching

When people talk about teaching in schools, they are usually referring to intentional and specific teaching, although what is unintentional may be equally significant. In other words, the attitudes and values implicit in what teachers say and do are important, even if they are not articulated as part of the intended learning.

We see good teaching as characterized by five dimensions (with teachers displaying various strengths in each).¹ We are

“Program versus Process: It is time to restore the balance, which has swung too far in the direction of process. Books without content have a lot of empty pages. People without information have hollow heads. There are great novels, great pieces of music, great mathematical ideas. While we are teaching them how to think and how to research, let us give students material with substance.

Pedagogues are in a froth all across the province about group work, as if some new educational miracle medicine had been discovered. If I recall rightly, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all used group work. I suspect they also used [a] variety of other teaching techniques – individual instruction, lecture, memory work, games, pictures, field trips, experiments, hands-on practice, etc. The point is that the technique should fit the subject, the topic, the people involved, the time of day, even the weather.”

Judith Rapson, teacher

aware that listing the characteristics or factors required in good teaching risks sounding too clear-cut, when in fact teaching is complex, requiring judgment and sensitivity as well as knowledge and skill. We are also aware that not everyone may agree with our principles concerning what teachers should know and be able to do, and what personal qualities they should have.²

1. Teachers care about and are committed to students and their learning. They know enough about all their students to be able to decide how to teach them effectively.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach the material to students: in other words, they know how to make knowledge accessible to students.

3. Guided by clear goals, teachers manage and monitor student learning.
4. Teachers do not always work in isolation; they learn from and collaborate with others, including students, colleagues, parents, and the community.
5. Teachers critically examine their own practice, and continue to learn throughout their careers.

1. Teachers care about and are committed to students and their learning

This is the most fundamental characteristic of good teaching. Children and adolescents need to be cared for, in the sense of being understood, respected, and recognized. Students thrive in settings where they are treated fairly and empathetically.³ The teachers who make a difference, who are remembered by their students, are those who have made the commitment to students and to students' learning the basis of their professional lives. Such teachers know their students well, and celebrate the diverse capacities, interests, and ethno-cultural backgrounds that students bring to the classroom. They are committed to strong, humane values, and create classroom climates in which such values provide the foundation for students.

Academic goals, which are paramount for schools, are more likely to be achieved when students feel valued as persons. All students need care, and that is particularly true of those whose families, for whatever reasons, cannot provide sufficient support. It has been suggested that “caring is the very bedrock of all successful education.”⁴

Being a teacher is not just a matter of having a body of knowledge and a capacity to control a classroom. That could be done by a computer with a cattle-prod. Just as important, being a teacher means being able to establish human relations with the people being taught.⁵

R.W. Connell, 1993

The commitment of teachers to their students' learning must also be emphasized: the teacher sets high expectations and tries a variety of methods to engage students in productive learning tasks. If students are not learning, good teachers do not blame them or look for scapegoats: they seek other approaches. In other words, they expect students to learn, and hold themselves and their students accountable. Caring, however fundamental it is, is not enough: what it

provides is the underlying moral foundation on which to base professional practice.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach the material to students: in other words, they know how to make knowledge accessible to students

Everyone acknowledges that teachers must know and understand the material they are teaching. They must be able to approach issues from a variety of perspectives, and to plan several alternative paths to understanding basic concepts. It is not always clear, however, how much and what kind of subject knowledge is required. As one researcher noted:

The evidence that knowledge of a subject is not enough to make a teacher is plain to anyone who has ever seen a Ph.D. in mathematics thoroughly confuse a freshman calculus class.⁶

Skilled teachers not only appreciate how students' prior understanding or misconceptions interfere with their learning, but can also intervene to overcome those difficulties. For instance, they can explain and demonstrate concepts in several different ways, so that students who have trouble with one approach may be better able to understand another path to learning.

Teachers need to be competent in a range of teaching strategies and methodologies. Because no one approach can be guaranteed to work with all students, teachers use their professional judgment to draw from a repertoire of possibilities, taking into account such student differences as diverse backgrounds and different rates of readiness for learning new material. Teachers who make the effort to use different modes of presentation and curriculum delivery such as direct instruction, co-operative small group learning, guided practice, cross-age tutoring, simulations, and student contracts, and who use a variety of instructional materials including text, graphic images, video, and audio tapes, are likely to reach more students than those who depend heavily on only one or two techniques.

The question of teaching methods is at the heart of several educational controversies. For example, the issue of "phonics" versus "whole language" as methods for teaching children to read has been the subject of intense public debate. Researchers and educators, however, have increasingly found a constructive middle ground between the rock of "whole language" and the hard place of "phonics," drawing

"The literature seems to support [a teacher's new role] as that of coach and facilitator, suggesting a shift from teacher as instructor. However, the teacher has responsibility for all students. We have a very diverse system (considering ability, culture, disability, learning style, race, religion). We now have a common curriculum with the expectation that all students will emerge from the curricular experience with some common learnings and at different levels of understanding. It follows that teachers will have to operate in a variety of roles, as many do now (e.g., instructor, demonstrator, lecturer, facilitator, coach, guide).

If all students' needs are to be addressed, the challenge is for teachers to have an extensive pedagogical repertoire and know how to select appropriately from that repertoire so that all students are reached at the right time".

Sybil Wilson, Faculty of Education, Brock University

from both approaches: the challenge now is for teachers to use this knowledge to launch all children into literacy. "Becoming literate means expanding our language...and becoming able to read and write this expanded language as fluently as we speak and hear it."

Teachers must believe that all students can learn, must communicate this belief to students, and then commit themselves to working to helping students achieve success, most crucially by providing a demanding and academically challenging program. Although it may seem obvious, teachers, no matter how well meaning, who sometimes "make allowances" for minority or disadvantaged students, and expect less of them, will not help them learn.

“Racism is systemic within the educational system. Though often unintentional, it frequently results from a lack of awareness of the discriminatory effect of many policies, procedures and practices on racial and linguistic minorities. Many are reluctant to discuss issues of racism. It can be an uncomfortable and threatening topic to address. It is important, however, to get individual teachers beyond their discomfort. Much of the impact of racist ideology has its most potent effect in the classroom on children from racial and ethnocultural minorities and on their parents. It can range from learning materials selected, materials that have an inherent negative bias to teaching strategies and attitudes employed in the classroom.”

Antiracist Multicultural Educators' Network of Ontario (AMENO)

Teachers must also be aware of the way children's language competence affects learning and their ability to give evidence of it. This is particularly important for teachers whose classes include students with limited proficiency in English or in French: teachers need to use their understanding to help students learn content, to think, and to communicate their knowledge to others.

Teachers can assist students from diverse backgrounds by providing connections that help them move from home to school. Such connections link students' life experiences to the kinds of instruction they receive in school, and thus help them make sense of their new learning. Teachers who understand and value what students bring to the classroom can build on students' prior knowledge: for instance, when the teacher is discussing farms or agriculture, students from Africa or Latin America may make little sense of the usual references to Canadian crops and animals. A skilful teacher uses examples of crops and animals with which these

students are familiar. Not only do they better understand the ideas being taught, but Canadian-born students learn from the experience of students from other countries. Without such supportive bridges, students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds may have difficulty grasping and making use of what is being taught.

3. Guided by clear goals, teachers organize and monitor student learning

Good teachers can say clearly what their goals are for student learning. They gather resources and plan lessons with those goals in mind, and they have a variety of ways of judging whether the goals are met. They do not ask students to participate in classroom activities without a clear sense of how such activities will bring them closer to specific learning goals.

Organizing learning also involves managing time in the classroom. The key objectives are to prevent disruptions, increase the time actually available for learning, and keep students engaged in the learning activities. This does not mean that well-managed classrooms are highly controlled or “run with an iron hand.” On the contrary, when routines are well thought out, consistently maintained, and understood by students, classrooms may seem, to an observer, to almost run themselves. Managing student learning also involves making work both challenging and interesting. Although basic skills are critical, advanced and higher-level thinking skills can and should be taught at the same time.

In whole-class teaching, maintaining interest and challenging students means pacing work appropriately. In dealing with small groups, it means ensuring that each student is assigned a particular responsibility for completing the group task, so that no student is left idle or marginalized.

As well, teachers do not leave to chance the development of the skills students need in the classroom, for instance, for working together in groups. Taking turns, disagreeing in an agreeable manner, asking for others' views, and other processes of interaction should be explicitly taught. Of course, some children come to school with some of these skills, and may even use them without explicit instruction, but it would be counterproductive to rely on that being the case.

Another important aspect of teaching is that of reinforcing learning and giving students feedback so they can learn from past performance and continue to improve.

Learning is enhanced when students understand what is expected of them, get recognition for their work, learn about their errors and receive guidance in improving their performance.⁸

Monitoring how well students are learning is vital for successful teaching. Teachers need to be well informed about various assessment practices, and must flexibly and appropriately employ a range of measures. Observations of students in class, portfolios of their work, class discussion, and paper-and-pencil tests – all these are tools for evaluating student learning. Good teachers know that the point of testing students is to improve and focus instruction, so all students can do well.

Good teachers also report progress fully and accurately to students and their parents. In doing so, they value clarity, avoiding “edubabble.” Teachers give feedback to students (and, ideally, to parents as well) on an on-going basis, often informally. They also provide more formal feedback to both students and parents through report cards and student/teacher or parent/teacher conferences. (Our position on assessment and reporting is developed more fully in Chapter 11.)

4. Teachers do not always work in isolation; they learn from and collaborate with others, including students, colleagues, parents, and the community

Although effective teachers have probably always been able to reach beyond themselves and their classrooms to draw on resources, working collaboratively is now crucial if schools are to meet the needs of all children. The traditional isolation of the teacher is no longer adequate. Teachers increasingly recognize that there are many viewpoints and that they can draw on various resources to meet student learning needs. Teachers who successfully involve parents in their children's learning will reap rewards in terms of increased student success.

Teachers may work with their colleagues in various ways: for example, by team teaching, collaborative planning, curriculum development, or supporting new teachers. Teachers can learn from their colleagues, as they share

A collaborative elementary-secondary literacy project

A research project sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and carried out in Peterborough County schools, tested cross-age tutoring as a way of improving the literacy of Grade 3 and 4 children who were academically behind their peers.

After being trained by a teacher who developed a cross-age tutoring program, each of 16 secondary school students worked with a pair of children from elementary schools. They met with their students for 30 minutes daily, four days a week, for about three and

a half months. Activities included direct reading and writing instruction, computer games, and sports and social conversation to build rapport.

At the end of the program, results showed that the children's self-esteem as learners increased, as did their reading scores, at a higher rate than would ordinarily be expected in that period of time.

Parents reported many positive changes in their children, which they attributed to the tutoring program. These included greater eagerness to attend school, less anxiety, and more school-related talk at home.

insights, questions, techniques, and suggestions, in person or through electronic networking. Teachers who collaborate with one another in planning and delivering the program are also modeling for their students the importance of working and learning together.

Schools must become more open to parents, students, and the community. Teachers can work more closely with parents, involve students in making suggestions and choices about learning activities, and draw on the community where appropriate.

5. Teachers critically examine their own practice, and continue to learn throughout their careers

If there ever was a time when teachers could rely on established routines and methods of teaching, they can do so no longer: now, they must be able to adapt to new demands and circumstances. Teachers look carefully at their own practices, learn about their students, and experiment with new ideas. With the rapid expansion of knowledge in many fields, teachers read widely and keep up with their profession.

At the same time, they recognize that they cannot look to research or to other practitioners for unambiguous prescriptions about how to teach: teaching is a complex and subtle activity, dependent on subject matter, student characteristics,

“The effectiveness of all schools, all teachers and all programs is not equal. Standardized testing should not be used to justify punishment but to identify and help what doesn’t work and to identify and encourage what does.

Teachers, students and education systems must become accountable to the public that supports them. Standardized testing is used in business, in the granting of trade licences and to select membership to the professions by almost every organization except for teachers. Standardized testing is widely accepted and if adopted by the education system, will give a much needed sense of competence and respectability.”

Lou D’Amore, teacher

and classroom context. The research on good or effective teaching can provide no more than general guidelines for real teachers in real classrooms. On-going judgments are called for as teachers “read” complex situations and improvise responses based on their knowledge and experience.

The availability of new technologies as vehicles for teaching and learning has also changed the nature of teaching. If they are to guide students effectively, teachers must become comfortable with this technology. All classrooms need computers, and all teachers and students need to become skilled at using them for a variety of tasks to reach a variety of goals.

We need teachers for whom the science and technology of teaching is continually developing and for whom the job is fundamentally an art which they study, reflect on, and refine throughout their careers.⁹

If teachers are expected to continue to develop their expertise, they must have systematic opportunities to reflect, to learn, and to discuss issues with others.

These five principles, or characteristics, can be seen as a framework for teachers who are continuing to learn

throughout their careers. Whereas very experienced and expert teachers can be characterized as having a high level of development in each dimension, newer teachers will be at an earlier stage, particularly in terms of the skills involved in managing and monitoring student learning, and in being able to work collaboratively with others beyond the classroom.

Good teachers in their schools

Teachers increasingly work, not only directly with students in the classroom, but in the broader school community, with colleagues, administrators, and parents. Good teachers, no matter how outstanding, do not exist in a vacuum. In Chapter 4, we argued that responsibilities must be clarified so that schools can meet student needs and maintain public confidence. We believe that teachers must focus primarily (but not exclusively) on developing academic competence, which we interpret as involving a range of literacies and numeracies, and that teachers and schools must work with others in the community to help meet important non-academic needs.

Good teaching, as described here, means that we are expecting a great deal from teachers. Such expectations are realistic only if teachers receive strong support in their schools, and if professional preparation and on-going professional development focus on the skills and knowledge that are vital to success.

Teachers are not alone in schools: principals and vice-principals have a critical role to play, and, as we emphasize throughout our report, so do other community agencies and resources.

Conclusion

We have stressed that the Commission sees teaching as complex, difficult, and supremely important. The five principles provide a vision of good teaching that can guide policy and practice in Ontario schools.

The role of teachers has changed over the past ten years. Teachers not only work directly with students in the classroom, but also, as part of their role as education professionals, contribute to and draw from the world beyond the classroom door, in the school and in the broader community.¹⁰ As we argue in Chapter 12, a renewed commitment to teacher education and professional support will be necessary to

ensure that teachers are able to play their pivotal roles in our restructured school system; and we look in more depth at the kind of working environment that best supports good teaching and how teachers can take more responsibility for their profession. We examine how teachers and school administrators should be prepared, and how to provide the on-going professional development that can ensure the career-long learning that is part and parcel of life as an education professional.

Building a learning community

In just five years, l'école secondaire de Paincourt, near Chatham, moved from having only 56 students and being threatened with closing, to a national "prize-winner," one of 20 schools across Canada chosen by the Canadian Education Association to participate in its study of exemplary secondary schools.

The transformation to a small (250 students), excellent high school was organized according to three principles: to reflect an understanding of how adolescents learn best; to embody what is excellent and challenging in education; and to engage a wide

range of community groups to participate and gain a sense of "ownership" in the school.

Special efforts are made to ensure that elementary feeder schools know Paincourt before students actually go there, so that they feel comfortable and familiar with it. This is one way in which the school recognizes the importance of making education continuous and community-based. The program has created a family atmosphere in the school, expanded community involvement, and increased students' self-esteem; it has enhanced the pride francophones feel in their community.

Endnotes

- 1 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, "What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do," in *Toward High and Rigorous Standards for the Teaching Profession*, 3rd edition (Detroit and Washington, DC: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1991). In developing our principles, we drew extensively on work by the National Board.
- 2 Some sources for further reading include:
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David Pratt, *Curriculum Planning: A Handbook for Professionals* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1994).
Robert Slavin, "Cooperative Learning," *Review of Educational Research* 50 (1980): 315-42.
- 3 Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992).
- 4 Noddings, *Challenge to Care in Schools*, p. 27.
- 5 R.W. Connell, *Schools and Social Justice* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 63.
- 6 N.L. Gage, "What Do We Know about Teaching Effectiveness?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 6, no. 2 (1984): 87-93.
- 7 Andrew Biemiller and David Booth, "Towards Higher Levels of Literacy in Ontario," p. 10. Paper prepared for the Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, 1994.
- 8 John Goodlad, *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1984), p. 111.
- 9 Michael Fullan, Michael Connelly, and Nancy Watson, *Teacher Education in Ontario: Current Practice and Options for the Future* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1990).
- 10 Dennis Thiessen and Ruth Pike, *Project 95+: The Image of the Teacher* (Toronto: Teacher Education Council, Ontario, 1992).



